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*George Campbell D.D.*

LECTURES  
ON  
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

*Sam<sup>l</sup>. Miller.*

AN ESSAY ON

CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE AND SELF-DENIAL:

BY THE LATE

✓  
GEORGE CAMPBELL, D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF MARISCHAL COLLEGE, ABERDEEN.

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE AUTHOR.

BY THE REV. GEORGE SKENE KEITH,

KEITH HALL, ABERDEENSHIRE.

—○○○❖○○—  
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

—○○○❖○○—  
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## ADVERTISEMENT.


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THE following discourses on Church History are a considerable part of a course of Theological Lectures, delivered in Marischal College. The Author had transcribed and revised them, and was every year making considerable alterations and additions to the Work. For more than the last twenty years of his life, his Lectures to the Students of Divinity occupied the greater part of his time, and those now offered to the Public were distinguished as the most curious and entertaining branch of the whole. By the hearers, and many others, the Publication has been called for with a degree of earnestness, which now seldom attends the appearance of a theological performance. Those who have read the other writings of the Author, will naturally expect here something of that clearness of apprehension, and acuteness of investigation, so eminently displayed in the Dissertation on Miracles, in answer

to Mr. Hume. And such as are acquainted with the subject, will admire the Author's well-digested learning, and will readily perceive the importance of an accurate historical deduction of the progress of church power, and the establishment of a hierarchy, and how clear and decisive it is, in all that may be termed the hinge of the controversy between high church and others. Seldom, very seldom indeed, has the subject been treated with the perspicuity, candour, and moderation, which distinguish the writings of Doctor Campbell

SOME ACCOUNT  
OF  
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF  
*DR. GEORGE CAMPBELL.*



FEW men, in the republic of letters, have been more generally, or more deservedly, esteemed than the late Dr. George Campbell. The powers of his mind were very great, and those powers were highly cultivated. He was certainly one of the most acute metaphysicians, one of the deepest philosophers, and one of the best critics, and most learned divines, which modern times have produced. It may naturally be expected, that along with this posthumous work, some account should be given of his life and writings. To gratify this expectation, the following paper is drawn up by one who knew him long, and who was honoured with his friendship. But the principal value of this account will be its fidelity in the relation of facts, joined to the writer's veneration for the memory of Dr. Campbell. For he is very sensible of his inability to do justice to the character of one, whose understanding



was both so acute and so capacious, and whose erudition was at once so deep and so various.

Dr. George Campbell was born at Aberdeen, the 25th day of December, 1719. His father was the Reverend Colin Campbell, one of the ministers of that city. His grandfather was George Campbell, esq. of Westhall, in Aberdeenshire, who had originally come from Moray, and was a descendant of Campbell of Moy, and a cadet of the family of Argyle.

Mr. Colin Campbell was a worthy man, equally remarkable for his piety, and for his humane disposition. On these accounts, he was esteemed by good men of all denominations, and was employed on various public occasions, and particularly at the meetings of the provincial synod, in receiving and distributing charitable contributions. But he was so entirely abstracted from the affairs of this world, that he took no concern in the management of his private fortune, though, besides his stipend as a clergyman, he was proprietor of a house in the city, and of a small estate in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen. He married Margaret Walker, daughter of Alexander Walker, esq. who had been provost, or mayor, of that city. By this lady he had six children, viz. three sons and three daughters, who were soon deprived of their worthy father. He died suddenly, the 27th of August, 1728; and his death was much lamented by all the inhabitants of Aberdeen, not merely on account of the loss sustained by his family, but because of the simplicity of his manners, the benevolence of his character, and his faithfulness in the discharge of his duty as a clergyman.

It was no doubt a great misfortune to George Campbell, who was his youngest son, to be so early deprived of his worthy father, who died in circumstances not very affluent.

But

But the exertions which he was obliged to make added not a little to the energy of his character ; and he was one of the many evidences of this truth, that the children of the fatherless are often more successful in life, than those who have enjoyed the protection, the support, and the tender care, of both their parents.

He was indeed very fortunate in being educated in the grammar school of Aberdeen, where the Latin tongue has been taught with great success for more than a century ; and in being a student at Marischal College, where Dr. Thomas Blackwell, principal and professor of Greek, though he was not Mr. Campbell's immediate preceptor, had introduced a thorough knowledge of Grecian literature ; and had excited an ardent zeal for carrying, as far as was possible, the study of that copious and expressive language, which had been too much neglected, but is now more attended to, in all the Scotch universities. It was by being early and thoroughly acquainted with these languages, that the foundation was laid of that extensive learning, which he afterwards acquired. For though a fine gentleman may rest satisfied with a general knowledge of belles lettres, and of philosophy, an intimate acquaintance with the Greek and Latin classics is necessary to the formation of a man of real erudition.

A circumstance of a very different nature tended to qualify Mr. Campbell for close, or at least for ingenious, reasoning. He originally intended to follow the profession of the law, and actually served an apprenticeship with a writer to the signet in Edinburgh. It was no doubt partly owing to this cause, that he acquired, very early, a general idea of the laws and constitution of this country, and a particular art in reasoning very ingeniously, and in drawing up very accurate papers. He was, however, soon

dissatisfied with the employment of a lawyer, or soon became more attached to the study of the scriptures. Whatever was the cause, he turned his whole attention to the latter, to pulpit eloquence, and to every thing that could qualify him for the office of a clergyman\*.

With this view, in 1741, he attended the divinity lectures of professor Gobdie, in Edinburgh, before the term of his apprenticeship was fully completed; and afterwards, he entered himself, as a student of theology, both in King's College, under the care of professor Lumsden, and in Marischal College, under the tuition of professor Chalmers. Here he was made acquainted with systematic divinity, and here also he delivered, with great approbation, those discourses, which are usually prescribed to students of divinity in the Scotch universities. But this ingenious young man, not satisfied with making these public appearances, and with studying polemic divinity, as it was then taught, wished to acquire knowledge on a larger scale, and to unite, in a literary society, with such of the students as were desirous of combining the pleasures of conversation with the pursuit of sacred literature. Accordingly, a society of this kind was formed in January, 1742, and the original members of it, besides Mr. Campbell, were John Glennie, now the Reverend Dr. John Glennie, minister of Mary-culter, and Mr. James McKail, afterwards minister of Monwhitter; to whom was soon afterwards added Mr. William Forbes, who will be mentioned here-

\* He complained, that the study of the law had made him lose a great part of the Greek, which he had acquired at the university. But after he turned his mind to that profession, in which he afterwards became so eminent, he redoubled his assiduity in recovering what he had lost. The man who is master of the elements of any language, needs only a little practice to regain its vocabulary.

after. The regulations of this society, in number fourteen, were extremely well calculated for improving the members in every thing that appeared to be either necessary, or useful, to students in divinity; and a number of very ingenious young men were gradually admitted into this *theological club*, as it was called, which was not only beneficial to the purposes of sacred literature, but probably suggested the idea of another society, of some fame, in Aberdeen, which will be afterwards mentioned in the proper place. It is, however, here to be noticed, that Mr. Campbell gave very early proofs both of his genius and erudition, while he attended this theological club, that he corresponded, with one of its original members \*, upon several

\* The other members of this society, or theological club, (of which an account, with a copy of its original regulations, has been transmitted to this writer by the Reverend Dr. Glennie) were Messrs. Alexander Forbes, afterwards minister of Fetteresso, Alexander Watt, minister of Alva, James Grant, afterwards minister of Knockando, David Brown, minister of Monzie, and afterwards of Largo, in Fife, William Moir, afterwards minister of Fyvie, John Freebairn, and Thomas Mercer, who died young, Alexander Gerard, afterwards the Rev. Dr. Gerard, professor of divinity both in Marischal and King's Colleges, and James Trail, afterwards lord bishop of Down and Connor. One very remarkable regulation of this club was, that no person could apply to be a member of it. But the club, by one of their members, sounded the disposition of every young man of genius, and of good morals, whom they wished to have into their society, and afterwards admitted him, on hearing that he was willing to become a member. The venerable Dr. Glennie adds in a note to the author of this account.—“As long as I could attend the club, all the members esteemed Mr. Campbell *as the life and soul of the society*. And in 1745, when I was in Edinburgh, he favoured me with a summary of several conferences, held in the club, on the subject of pulpit eloquence; and afterwards, with a copy of an order of preaching,



several important subjects connected with the study of theology, and that he was considered by all of them as a young man, who would soon rise to eminence in his profession.

After studying the usual number of years at the divinity hall, he was proposed to the synod; and having undergone the ordinary trials before the presbytery of Aberdeen, he was licensed as a probationer, or preacher of the gospel, on the 11th of June, 1746.

It soon appeared, that his fellow-students were well founded in the opinion, which they had formed of his character. Though his style, at first, was more ornamented than is consistent with the rules of chaste composition, (as that of every young man of genius will necessarily be for some time) his juvenile discourses were replete with good sense, and displayed, without any parade of science, both a general knowledge of theology, and a particular acquaintance with the holy scriptures. And such of his sermons as were addressed to the imagination, or to the passions, abounded with fine sentiments, and showed, that the seeds of oratory had been sown, not unsparingly, in the mind of this young divine, and that he had cultivated them with equal care and success.

He was, however, two years a preacher of the gospel, before he obtained a settlement in the church of Scotland. In 1747, he was an unsuccessful candidate for the parish of Fordoun, in Kincardineshire. Here the author of the

“ to be observed by a minister, when settled in a parish, and with some remarks on occasional discourses.” Dr. Glennie, who has also communicated to this writer most of the particulars of the early part of Dr. Campbell's history, adds, that besides himself, Mr. John Skinner, episcopal minister at Longside, is the only surviving class fellow of Mr. Campbell.

Encyclopedia Britannica \* remarks, that the other candidate, Mr. Forbes, was a man of very slender abilities, and supposed to be attached to the constitution and liturgy of the church of England; and insinuates, that on account of this supposed attachment, he was preferred to Mr. Campbell. But the writer of that article, in the supplement to the Encyclopedia, makes his conjectures with too much freedom. The fact is, that the spirit of clanship, and a regard to family connections, were then very prevalent; and Mr. Forbes (who was not only a worthy man, but a man of considerable learning, being, as above-mentioned, one of the original members of the theological club) was more intimately acquainted, and more particularly connected, than Mr. Campbell was, with the heritors, or landed proprietors, of the parish of Fordoun; and his father possessed an estate in the neighbouring parish. But to return:—

Mr. Campbell's fame, as a preacher, and as a young man of learning and genius, soon procured him a title to another settlement. Sir Alexander Burnett, of Leys, at the desire of his son, afterwards Sir Robert Burnett, and of George Burnett, esq. of Kemnay, signed a presentation in his favour to the church of Banchory Ternan, seventeen miles west from Aberdeen. As none of the three gentlemen were personally acquainted with Mr. Campbell, and had not received the least solicitation from any of his friends, and as Mr. Burnett, of Kemnay, was obliged to

\* As the Encyclopedia Britannica is a work of considerable merit, it was necessary to correct these, and some other mistakes, into which the author of that article has fallen with respect to Dr. Campbell. If Mr. Forbes had been suspected of attachment to episcopacy, the General Assembly, who appointed his settlement, would have rejected him.

ride into Aberdeen with a blank in the presentation, in order to get Mr. Campbell's christian name, of which they were ignorant, inserted in the body of the deed, the writer of this account thinks, that he owes it as a tribute of justice to all concerned in this transaction, to state the above facts, which reflect so much honour on the three gentlemen, as well as on Mr. Campbell, whom they patronized in so handsome a manner. Perhaps the relating of this story may induce some other patron, or man of rank, whose mind is superior to motives of interest, and not warped by political connections, to consult his own happiness, by doing a similar action to some young man of genius, and to hand down his own name to posterity, along with that of a great literary character, whose rising merit, and early acquired knowledge, he shall have had the good sense to discern, and the virtue to patronize.

Mr. Campbell, after the usual trials before the presbytery of Kincardine-o-niel, was ordained minister of Ban-chory Ternan, on the 2d of June, 1748. It was while he held this charge, that the powers of his mind began more fully to unfold themselves, and his character to rise in the opinion of men of learning. Here he prosecuted the study of the holy scriptures, and here he instructed others with very great success. In the church of Scotland, it is the practice to explain a chapter, or large portion of scripture, every Lord's day, or at least every other Sunday. Mr. Campbell paid so much attention to this, and was so much master of it, that his character, as a scripture critic, and lecturer of holy writ, was deservedly very high. His language, in these discourses, was remarkably simple and perspicuous: he had the happy art of *bringing down* his knowledge to the level of the understandings of his ordinary hearers; and, without making an ostentatious display  
of



of his erudition, he indirectly availed himself of his extensive reading, and of his acquaintance with the original languages, and seldom failed to throw light upon every passage of scripture, that he attempted to illustrate. In a short time, he began to be considered as the best lecturer, or expounder of holy scriptures, in that part of the country. It was while explaining the New Testament to his parishioners, that he first formed a plan of translating that part of it, *viz.* the four gospels, which he afterwards published. And it was in this country parish, long before any attention was paid, in the north of Scotland, to the niceties of grammar, that he composed a part of the philosophy of rhetoric.

While thus employed both as a divine and a philosopher, he was very fortunate in marrying Miss Grace Farquharson, daughter to Mr. Farquharson, of Whitehouse, a lady remarkable for the sagacity of her understanding, the integrity of her heart, the general propriety of her conduct, and her skill in the management of domestic economy. She was uncommonly attentive to his health, for his constitution was naturally delicate; and she contributed, by that attention, as far as human means could do, to prolong his useful life. She died the 16th of February, 1792. They were eminently happy in each other.

After he had been *nine* years in this country parish, he was translated to Aberdeen, and became one of the ministers of that city on the 23d day of June, 1757, in the room of Mr. John Bisset, deceased. Here his character, as a lecturer, was completely established: here he had an opportunity of consulting what books he wished to see on the various subjects to which he turned his attention; and here he delivered several ingenious and learned discourses

on rhetoric, criticism, and other subjects, in the literary society of Aberdeen, of which he was a member.

It may be proper to mention, in this place, that the theological club, of which he was one of the projectors, had been dissolved a few years before this period, in consequence of most of the members being settled in parishes at a considerable distance from Aberdeen. But the late Dr. Reid, of Glasgow, and Dr. Gregory, of Edinburgh, who, at that time, were professors in King's College, projected a society on a larger scale, which was to discuss both literary and philosophical subjects. Accordingly, a few months after Mr. Campbell was admitted to be one of the ministers of Aberdeen, this society was formed in the beginning of the year 1758, and the original members of it, besides Mr. Campbell and Drs. Reid and Gregory above-mentioned, were Dr. David Skene, physician, (a man of genius and taste, who was particularly skilled in botany) Mr. Robert Trail, afterwards the Reverend Dr. Robert Trail, minister of Banff, and Mr. John Stewart, professor of mathematics in Marischal College. To these were afterwards added, Dr. Alexander Gerard, professor of divinity, Dr. James Beattie, professor of moral philosophy, Dr. George Skene, professor of natural philosophy, Mr. John Farquhar, minister of Nigg, author of the sermons which have been so deservedly esteemed, and several other gentlemen, who have not been so generally known to the public, but who were much esteemed in this society, of which a more particular account will be found in the life of Dr. Gregory, prefixed to his works:

Mr. Campbell had not as yet published any thing, excepting a sermon, preached at opening the synod of Aberdeen, April 7, 1752, on the character of a minister as a

teacher

teacher and pattern. This discourse possesses considerable merit ; but, on account perhaps of its style being too much ornamented, he has not thought proper to include it in the collection of sermons, which he made a few years before his death.

In 1759, he was presented by his Majesty to the office of principal of Marischal College, then vacant by the death of principal Pollock. It deserves here to be remarked, that the same spirit of clanship, or attachment, to family connections, which occasioned his disappointment at Fordoun 12 years before, was the cause of his elevation to the dignity of principal. It has already been noticed, that his father was a cadet of the family of Argyle ; and it may be also remarked, that John, the great Duke of Argyle, in 1715, visited his father, when he was at Aberdeen at the head of the army, and paid considerable attention to him, as a descendant of his family. On the death of principal Pollock, two other candidates applied for the vacant office. The magistrates of Aberdeen supported the brother of their provost, or mayor, professor Duncan ; and the great landed interest of the county, with the good offices, or wishes, of a number of the masters in Marischal College, was exerted in favour of Dr. Francis Skene, a gentleman of a most respectable character, and engaging manners, who had been above twenty years a professor of philosophy in that university. Mr. Campbell had no thoughts, at first, of making any application ; but he was afterwards prevailed upon to write to Archibald Duke of Argyle, who had, for many years, had the chief direction of Scotch affairs. In this letter, Mr. Campbell modestly stated his relation to his Grace's family. And this circumstance, added no doubt to his character as a man of abilities, procured to him, in a very short time, a royal presentation to the office  
of

of principal of Marischal College; so that the same spirit which had kept him from getting a country parish, was now the cause of placing him at the head of an university.

Principal Campbell soon made it appear, that he was worthy of his new dignity. Mr. David Hume had lately published his *Essay on Miracles*, which made so great a noise in the learned world. He had met with many opponents; but he seemed to despise them all, till principal Campbell published his celebrated *Dissertation on Miracles*, which has deservedly raised his character as a most acute metaphysician, and a well bred polemical writer. This dissertation was originally drawn up in the form of a sermon, which he preached before the provincial synod of Aberdeen; on the 9th of October, 1760; and which, on their requesting him to publish it, he afterwards moulded into the form of a dissertation. Before it was published, he sent a copy of his manuscript to Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, with a request that, after perusing it, he would communicate the performance to Mr. Hume. The learned and judicious Dr. Blair read the dissertation both as a friend, and as a critic, then showed it to his opponent, and afterwards wrote Mr. Campbell both what had occurred to himself, and what Mr. Hume chose at first to write on the subject. It soon appeared, that this sceptical philosopher, with all his affected equanimity, felt very sensibly, on reading so acute, so learned, and so complete an answer to his essay on miracles. He complained of some harsh expressions, and stated a few objections to what Mr. Campbell had advanced, showing, in some cases, where his meaning had been misunderstood. Instead of being displeased, his generous adversary instantly expunged, or softened, every expression that either was  
severe,



severe, or was only supposed to be offensive, removed every objection that had been made to his arguments, and availed himself of the remarks both of his friend, and of his opponent, in rendering his dissertation a complete and unanswerable performance. Thus corrected and improved, it was put to the press, and a copy of it sent to Mr. Hume. That philosopher was charmed with the gentlemanly conduct of Mr. Campbell, confessed that he felt a great desire to answer the dissertation, and declared that he would have attempted to do something in this way, if he had not laid it down as a rule, in early life, never to return an answer to any of his opponents. Thus principal Campbell, from a manly and well-bred treatment of his adversary, rendered his own work more correct, gained the esteem of his opponent, and left an example worthy to be imitated by all polemical writers \*.

Before this dissertation was published, he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the neighbouring university of King's College in Old Aberdeen. This degree was procured without any solicitation on his part; for George Campbell had so much innate vigour of mind, as to be more ambitious to deserve, than to obtain, a title.

The dissertation on miracles was published in 1763, and was dedicated to the Earl of Bute, the chancellor of Marischal College University, who was at that time prime minister of Great Britain. It soon appeared, that it required neither an academical title to its author, nor the patronage of a minister of state, to recommend it to men of learning. For besides an extensive sale in Great Britain, where a second edition received new improvements from the author, and where a third impression, with considerable additions and corrections, has been lately published, it was translated

\* Mr. Hume's letter to Dr. Campbell will be found at the end of these Memoirs,

into the French, Dutch, and German languages ; and from this time, among all the learned men in Europe, the name of Dr. Campbell was always mentioned with the highest respect.

As the dissertation on miracles has been so long before the public, it might be deemed improper, in the writer of this account, to give a large critique on this celebrated performance. What he has to observe shall be comprised in a few sentences. Mr. Hume was a most subtle metaphysician ; and had the singular art of perplexing his readers, by using the same term, or phrase, in various senses, (an art which no ordinary reader would have detected) and in introducing general descriptions, or bold assertions, in so grave a manner, and with such an air of candour, as to make them appear to be strong arguments, if not strict demonstrations. Dr. Campbell, with wonderful acuteness, catches every change in the import of Mr. Hume's language, pursues this metaphysical Proteus under every form, till he makes him re-assume his own shape and likeness ; pours the noon-day light of reason, where the other had involved himself in a cloud of scepticism ; detects the fallacy of his arguments, or the equivocation of his phrases ; brings all his descriptions to the test of definitions ; and exposes his bold assertions, or pretended demonstrations, by a simple, but happy, illustration, taken from an occurrence in common life, and level to the capacity even of an ordinary reader. A single example of this kind deserves to be selected, and shall be stated as concisely as possible.

Mr. Hume, in his essay on miracles, had asserted, that  
 “ a variable experience gives rise to probability only, but  
 “ that an uniform experience amounts to a proof ; ”—that  
 “ a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature ; and that  
 “ as a firm and unalterable experience has established  
 “ these laws, the proof against a miracle is as entire as  
 “ any

“ any argument from experience can possibly be imagined ;”—also, that “ a miracle, however attested, can never be rendered credible, even in the lowest degree ; nay, that a miracle, supported by any human testimony, is more properly a subject of derision than of argument.” Dr. Campbell, in the very first chapter of his dissertation, shows, that “ Mr. Hume’s favourite argument is founded on a false hypothesis. For testimony has a natural and original influence upon belief, antecedent to all experience. Accordingly, youth, which is unexperienced, is credulous ; and age, which has had much experience, is distrustful ; and there is the strongest presumption in favour of testimony, till properly refuted by experience ; nay, when once testimonies are introduced, former experience is generally of no account in the reckoning.” In confirmation of his arguments, he makes the following supposition :—“ I have lived for some years near a ferry. It consists with my knowledge, that the passage-boat has a thousand times crossed the river, and as many times returned safe. An unknown man, whom I have just now met, tells me, in a serious manner, that it is lost ; and affirms, that he himself, standing on the bank, was a spectator of the scene, that he saw the passengers carried down the stream, and the boat overwhelmed. No person, who is influenced in his judgment of things, not by philosophical subtleties, but by common sense, a much surer guide, will hesitate to declare, that in such a testimony I have probable evidence of the fact asserted.” He afterwards shows, that this evidence may be refuted by contradictory testimony, and by information concerning the character of the person who related the story ; but that the two thousand instances formerly known, and the single instance at-

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tested,



tested, as they relate to different facts, are not contradictory. Thus, in a few pages, he proves that Mr. Hume's favourite argument is founded on a false hypothesis, consequently, that the whole structure, which he had built upon it, must fall to the ground. But to return.—

Dr. Campbell continued for 12 years to discharge the offices of principal of Marischal College, and of one of the ministers of Aberdeen. In the former capacity, he was equally esteemed by the professors and students; for he united great learning to a conduct strictly virtuous, and to manners equally gentle and pleasant. In the latter office, he lived in the greatest harmony with his colleagues, over whom he affected no superiority; and by all his hearers was esteemed as a worthy man, a good preacher, and one of the best lecturers whom they had ever heard. In lecturing, indeed, he always shone; while he rarely composed sermons, but preached from a few, and sometimes without any notes. Yet his discourses, on particular occasions, when he submitted to the labour of composing them, were every way worthy of Dr. Campbell. Even on ordinary subjects, when he spoke extempore, he generally handled strong points, or seldom failed to say such useful things, as were calculated to inform the understandings, or touch the hearts of his hearers. But he excelled most in lecturing, from the great knowledge which he had of the scriptures, and of whatever was necessary for their illustration. And in the middle period of his life, there were, no doubt, a few years, during which he had not such a call for exertion, and of course did not study with that intense application, which he felt himself obliged to do at a more advanced period of life. Yet even at this time, he amused himself with the attractive science of botany, in which he became a great proficient; and as all  
his

his knowledge was made subservient to useful purposes, he applied this to the illustration of several passages of scripture, as will appear to a careful reader of his translation of the Gospels, and of some of his notes upon that translation. During this period, he also bestowed considerable attention on composing and revising the philosophy of rhetoric. And besides acquiring a great knowledge of the Hebrew, as well as improving his acquaintance with the Greek and Latin, (all which he necessarily studied as a christian divine) he made himself master of the French and Italian, so far as to become a critic in these languages. But we now come to the most important part of his history.

On the 26th of June, 1771, he was elected, by the town-council of Aberdeen, professor of divinity in Marischal College, in the room of Dr. Alexander Gerard, who was translated to the divinity chair in King's College. This appointment was attended with the resignation of his pastoral charge as one of the ministers of Aberdeen. But as minister of Gray friars, an office conjoined to the professorship about a century ago, he was obliged to preach once every Lord's-day in one of the established churches; and besides this, he had the offices both of principal of Marischal College, and of professor of divinity, to discharge. The duties of the latter were very considerable, required great exertion from him, and were voluntarily rendered more fatiguing to his own person, and more useful to the students, by Dr. Campbell, who gave more prelections, every session, than he was supposed to be under any obligation of delivering.

It was the practice of the former professors to meet twice every week during the divinity session, and commonly to spend one of those days in hearing discourses

from the students. The professor lectured the other day; and when the young men had no discourses to deliver, he gave prelections on both days. But Dr. Campbell, as soon as he entered on his new office, intimated, that he was always to prelect both on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the days on which they formerly met; and that he was to meet a third day, *viz.* on Saturday, for hearing discourses from the students, as often as they had any ready to deliver. By this means, the students heard nearly double the number of lectures, which they formerly received from the professor of divinity.

Another great improvement was adopted by Dr. Campbell, in regard to the time of finishing his whole course of prelections on theology. This formerly had been very indefinite, and extended far beyond the greatest number of years, which any student could be supposed to attend the divinity-hall. But he restricted this period to four years, during which he proposed to go over all the subjects necessary to be treated of in that place. By this means, every student, who chose to attend regularly during the shortest period prescribed by the laws of the church, might hear a whole course of these lectures on theology.

But the greatest of all the recommendations of these valuable prelections was their intrinsic merit; and this too consisted not merely in the ingenuity, or learning, displayed in every, or in any, particular lecture, but the clear and extensive arrangement, which they possessed as parts of a great whole. His own views, on the proper mode of lecturing from a divinity-chair, deserve to be generally known. The writer of this account remembers the following remarkable expressions on this subject, which he used in a conversation with the students, when speaking

speaking of the plan which he intended to pursue. "Gentlemen, the nature of my office has been much misunderstood. It is supposed, that I am to *teach you every thing connected with the study of divinity*. I tell you honestly, that I am to *teach you nothing*. Ye are not school-boys. Ye are young men, who have finished your courses of philosophy, and ye are no longer to be treated as if ye were at school. Therefore I repeat it, I am to *teach you nothing* ; but, by the grace of God, I will assist you to *teach yourselves every thing* \*."

Accordingly, the plan, or outline, of his prelections was equally simple and comprehensive. It contained, under the theory, or theoretical part, every thing that the student of divinity should know ; and under the practical branch, every thing that he should do as a reader of sacred or church history, a scripture critic, a polemic divine, a pulpit orator, a minister of a parish, and a member of the church courts on the Scotch establishment. Few of the children of men have possessed that reach of mind, and diversified erudition, which so eminently qualified him both for striking out, and for filling up, this bold and comprehensive outline. His understanding was so capacious, as to take a great whole at once into his view ; yet so acute, that the smallest part could not escape his notice. To comprehend systems, and to separate atoms in idea, appeared equally easy and congenial to his mind.

The only parts of these valuable lectures, which he published himself, are those canons of scripture criticism, and

\* The conversation, here mentioned, was really a kind of examination, which he held for the purpose of recapitulating his lectures. Those conversations, as he called them, were dropped after trying them one session.



a few other prelections on the same subject, which are included in his preliminary dissertations, that are printed along with his translation of the gospels. Much and justly as these dissertations have been admired, the writer of this account shall ever regret, that Dr. Campbell did not publish, or prepare for the press, his whole course of prelections in theology, instead of those detached parts, however excellent. Had he bent the whole powers of his mind to the arrangement of his plan, to the filling up of his outlines, and to the finishing of these prelections in that masterly way, in which he was capable of finishing them, they would, in the opinion of this writer, have been the greatest present that not only christian divines, but also private christians, who are men of literature, have received since the days of Jerom. The only parts, however, that he lived to prepare for the press, excepting the above dissertations, which he published himself, were his prelections on ecclesiastical history, which are now given to the public, and which he left fully written out, and in a proper state for publication. He also mentioned to the writer of this account his intention, if his life had been prolonged, to leave his prelections on pulpit eloquence (of which he had only written *a prima cura* for the use of the students) also in a condition for being published at his death. It is hoped, that these lectures, though they want the last touches of his pen, will not be locked up from the world. They will give many useful hints to men of weaker minds, or more circumscribed erudition; and the character and masterly hand of the author will be seen and admired, notwithstanding any little imperfections or inaccuracies in point of composition. The first sketch drawn by a Raphael, or Michael Angelo, is worth preserving.

In case these valuable prelections of Dr. Campbell should not be published, the writer of this account thinks, that it will be of service to the interests of sacred literature, and particularly to the teachers of religion, and students of divinity, to exhibit a general view of those excellent lectures in this history of his life. Even if they should be published, this sketch, which is, no doubt, an imperfect one, may excite the public curiosity, and inform men what they may expect to see treated more at large in Dr. Campbell's valuable manuscripts, which he did not live to publish, and which he had not written over a second time, or composed originally with any view to their publication. But as a very short sketch would convey too little information, and as the general view, which is here proposed to be given, would weary the reader's patience, or take off his attention from this history, it is subjoined in a separate paper, which the writer of this account acknowledges to be very imperfect, yet hopes may be useful to those, who may wish to have some idea of Dr. Campbell's prelections.

His different publications, besides the dissertation on miracles, which has been already mentioned, may now be considered in the order in which they were published.

On the 9th of April, 1771, he preached, before the synod of Aberdeen, his excellent sermon on the spirit of the gospel \*. In this discourse, after ascertaining the meaning of

\* Dr. Wodrow, in his life of principal Leechman, is at a loss to say, whether this sermon of Dr. Campbell's, or another of Dr. Leechman's, on the same text, have done most justice to the subject. This writer should have taken no notice of Dr. Leechman's having published a discourse on the same text and subject with Dr. Campbell, if Dr. Wodrow had not done so before him: for comparative praise is not such a tribute as is due to the memory of these two eminent

of the words on which he preached with his usual critical acumen, he describes the spirit of false religion as opposed to true, and also the spirit of true religion as opposed to false, in such strong terms as raised up a number of adversaries against him. For he struck at once both at fanaticism, and at superstition, and at fanatics and superstitious persons of all parties and descriptions. Widely different as those persons esteemed themselves to be from one another, from the mere circumstance of their differing from each other in natural temper and disposition, and in acquired opinions in religious controversy, his comprehensive mind saw at once the mutual relation which superstition and enthusiasm bear to each other; and he very happily illustrates this in the following spirited metaphor. "Ignorance," says he, "is the mother of both by different fathers. The second she had by presumption, the first by fear. Hence that wonderful mixture of contrariety and resemblance in the character of her children." This discourse will long be read as an evidence of that spirit which it describes, a spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind. The attacks which were made upon it are already forgotten; and its merit is now universally acknowledged.

In 1776 Dr. Campbell published his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*. This work established his reputation as an excellent grammarian, an accurate and judicious critic, a man of a fine imagination and delicate taste, and a philosopher of great acuteness and deep penetration. The two

nent men. Yet he would observe, that Dr. Leechman, though a man of an amiable character, considerable learning, and respectable abilities, was a *spirit of a different order* from Dr. Campbell. At the same time he must express his very high opinion of Dr. Wodrow's life of Dr. Leechman, by which he has been much instructed.

first



first chapters of this book had been composed as early as 1750 ; and a remarkable coincidence had taken place between him and Dr. Beattie, on the subject of the second chapter on Wit, Humour, and Ridicule. Here Dr. Campbell remarks, very prettily, that “ a man must have uncommon confidence in his own faculties, who is not sensibly more satisfied in the justness of their procedure, especially in abstract matters, when he discovers such a coincidence with the ideas and reasonings of writers of discernment.” Dr. Beattie on the other hand observes, that his “ sentiments are the same with Dr. Campbell’s,” but adds, with that candour which is so becoming in a man of science, “ his arrangement is better than mine.” One of the most ingenious and most philosophical parts of this work is the inquiry into the cause of that pleasure, which arises in the mind from objects or representations, which excite pity and other painful feelings\*. Another remarkable part of the Philosophy of Rhetoric

\* This ingenious hypothesis of making all our actions proceed from *self-hatred*, instead of self-love, deserves here to be selected, as a very happy method of exposing such hypothetical arguments, and as at least as plausible a system, as is adopted by those who insist that all our actions proceed from self-love, and that even our *pity* is an offspring of this passion. Phil. of Rhetoric, Vol. I, p. 310. “ Suppose I have taken it into my head to write a theory of the mind, and in order to give simplicity and unity to my system, as well as to recommend it by the grace of novelty, I have resolved to reduce all the actions, all the pursuits, and all the passions of men from *self-hatred*, as the common fountain.”—“ Let it not be imagined that nothing specious can be urged in favour of this hypothesis. What else, it may be pleaded, could induce the miser to deny himself not only the comforts, but even almost the necessities of life, to pine for want in the midst of plenty, to live in uninterrupted  
“ anxiety

Rhetoric is on the nature and use of verbal criticism, where the comprehensive mind of the author has laid down

“ anxiety and terror? All the world sees that it is not to procure his  
 “ own enjoyment, which he invariably and to the last repudiates.  
 “ And can any reasonable person be so simple as to believe, that it is  
 “ for the purpose of leaving a fortune to his heir, a man whom  
 “ he despises, for whose deliverance from perdition he would not  
 “ part with half-a-crown, and whom of all mankind, next to him-  
 “ self, he hates the most? What else could induce the sensualist  
 “ to squander his all in dissipation and debauchery, to rush on ruin  
 “ certain and foreseen? You call it pleasure. But is he ignorant,  
 “ that his pleasures are more than ten times overbalanced by the  
 “ plagues and even torments which they bring? Does the conviction,  
 “ or even the experience, of this deter him? On the contrary, with  
 “ what steady perseverance, with what determined resolution, doth  
 “ he proceed in his career, not intimidated by the haggard forms,  
 “ which stare him in the face, poverty and infamy, disease and death?  
 “ What else could induce the man who is reputed covetous not of  
 “ money, but of fame, that is of wind, to sacrifice his tranquillity,  
 “ and almost all the enjoyments of life; to spend his days and nights  
 “ in fruitless disquietude and endless care? Has a bare name, think  
 “ you, an empty sound, such inconceivable charms? Can a mere no-  
 “ thing serve as a counterpoise to solid and substantial good? Are  
 “ we not rather imposed on by appearances, when we conclude this  
 “ to be his motive? Can we be senseless enough to imagine, that it  
 “ is the bubble reputation (which, were it any thing, a dead man surely  
 “ cannot enjoy) that the soldier is so infatuated as to seek even in  
 “ the cannon’s mouth? Are not these, therefore, but the various  
 “ ways of self-destroying, to which, according to their various tastes,  
 “ men are prompted by the same universal principle of self-hatred.  
 “ If you should insist on certain phenomena, which appear to be irre-  
 “ concilable to my hypothesis, I think I am provided with an  
 “ answer. You urge our readiness to resent an affront or injury,  
 “ real or imagined, which we receive, and which ought to gratify in-  
 “ stead of provoking us, on the supposition that we hate ourselves.  
 “ But may it not be retorted, that its being a gratification is that  
 “ which

down certain canons on a matter, which was not supposed to be subject to any general rules. In this work we have the nicest distinctions with respect to style and elocution; and the last chapter of the first volume contains some of the most accurate discrimination and judicious criticism, that are to be found in any writer on english grammar. The account given of the different sources of evidence, and of the different subjects to which they are respectively adapted, deserves to be particularly noticed. This theory of evidence is considered by the author of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, as the most valuable part of the Philo-

“ which excites our resentment, in as much as we are enemies to  
 “ every kind of self indulgence? If this answer will not suffice, I  
 “ have another which is excellent. It lies in the definition of the  
 “ word revenge. Revenge, I pronounce, may be justly deemed an  
 “ example of unmixed self-abhorrence and benignity, and may be  
 “ resolved into that power of imagination, by which we apply the  
 “ sufferings that we inflict on others to ourselves; we are said to  
 “ wreak our vengeance no longer than we fancy ourselves to suffer,  
 “ and to be satiated by reflecting, that the sufferings of others are  
 “ not really ours; that we have been but indulging a dream of self-  
 “ punishment, from which when we awake and discover the fiction,  
 “ our anger instantly subsides, and we are meek as lambs. Is this  
 “ extravagant? Compare it, I beseech you, with the preceding ex-  
 “ plication of compassion, to which it is a perfect counterpart.  
 “ Consider seriously, and you will find that it is not in the smallest  
 “ degree more manifest, that another, and not ourselves, is the ob-  
 “ ject of our resentment when we are angry, than it is that another,  
 “ and not ourselves, is the object of our compassion, when we are  
 “ moved with pity. Both indeed have a self-evidence in them, which  
 “ while our minds remain unsophisticated by the dogmatism of sys-  
 “ tem, extorts from us an unlimited assent.” This long quotation  
 has been selected not merely on account of its being one of the  
 most striking passages of the book, but because the patrons of the  
 doctrine of self-love are also, for the most part, enemies to reve-  
 lation, and therefore their tenets should be exposed.

sophy

sophy of Rhetoric, “to which there is nothing superior, “perhaps nothing equal in our own or in any other language.” The same writer says of Dr. Campbell, “His philosophy in general is the philosophy of Dr. Reid; and where he differs from that acute reasoner “respecting abstraction, and some other objects of metaphysical disquisition, it is impossible to refuse him the “pre-eminence in every thing but style.” It may be proper to observe, concerning this last remark, that Dr. Campbell and Dr. Reid delivered a great part of their works in the literary society of Aberdeen, where that system of moral philosophy, which is founded on maxims of common sense, was first taught by Dr. Reid, and no doubt much improved by the observations made by Dr. Campbell, and the other learned and ingenious members of this society, which was the cradle of so many valuable authors. As to Dr. Campbell’s style being inferior to Dr. Reid’s, the style of both these gentlemen was formed from their mode of thinking, as that of every man, who writes much, and thinks always for himself, will necessarily be. Dr. Campbell on all abstract subjects thought with perspicuity, and consequently expressed himself with clearness and precision. Meretricious ornaments on all abstract subjects would be equally despised by both these gentlemen. But if style be here a matter of such high consideration, it may be remarked, that the allegory of Probability and Plausibility, viewed as a piece of elegant composition, and considering the style, independently of its philosophy or sentiment, is unquestionably one of the finest pieces of description in the English language. So much with respect to Dr. Campbell’s Philosophy of Rhetoric, which is, perhaps, at least, equal to any other part of his works.

In



In 1776 he also preached, on the national fast on account of the american war, a sermon on the nature, extent, and importance of the duty of allegiance, which has been much admired, and very generally read. Six thousand copies of it were afterwards published at the desire of dean Tucker\*, and circulated through America. In this sermon he shows, that the british colonies in America had no right, either from reason or from scripture, to throw off their allegiance; and in a very spirited and humorous manner, describes the terms upon which America was willing to be reconciled to Britain; but afterwards, in very guarded language, insinuates that America should be allowed to be independent, rather than Great Britain should continue the war. "Better far," says he, "let them have their beloved independence. I am not certain, that this would not have been the best method from the beginning. I say this, however, with all due submission and deference, for I am far from considering myself as a proper judge of so nice a question."

In 1777 Dr. Campbell preached a sermon, on the success of the first publishers of the gospel considered as a proof of its truth, before the society for propagating christian knowledge. It was published at their request; and is certainly a very masterly discourse. The doctrine of the cross, as an article of faith, a practical lesson, or a memorable event, which equally disgusted the jews and gentiles, and the preaching of the fishermen of Galilee, whose minds were uncultivated, whose dress was mean, and whose language and manners were held in contempt,

\* Dr. Campbell carried on a correspondence with this acute reasoner, and able political philosopher; and said that his letters to dean Tucker cost him some thought and trouble in writing them.



in an age of literature and refinement, “when Rome was  
 “in the zenith of her power, and when the grecian arts  
 “and sciences shone forth in their meridian glory,” are  
 here shown to have been the most unfit means in the  
 world for propagating a religion; and are finely contrasted  
 with Mahomet’s preaching by the sword, and with the  
 missions of the roman catholics, particularly of Francis  
 Xavier. “The policy of Heaven,” there using a bold  
 expression, is admirably contrasted “with that of earth;”  
 and the argument, of the truth of christianity’s being  
 evinced by the success of the first publishers of the gospel,  
 is stated very forcibly, and with several useful reflections.

Two years after this, viz. in 1779, he published his  
 address to the people of Scotland on the alarms which had  
 been raised by the bill in favour of the roman catholics.  
 Dr. Campbell would zealously contend for the faith, of  
 the truth of which he was fully persuaded; and under the  
 appellation of *a spirit of fear*, he had exposed, in a very  
 striking manner, the superstition of the church of Rome:  
 but he would not, on any account, consent to persecute  
 those who differed from him in religious opinions; and he  
 had no objection to the repeal of the penal laws, which,  
 in times of civil commotion, had been passed against those  
 of the roman catholic persuasion. In this address, which  
 is a very able one, he considers the doctrine of the gospel  
 in regard to persecution; the conclusions to which sound  
 policy would lead us in the toleration of the papists; and  
 the proper and christian expedients for promoting religious  
 knowledge, and repressing error. The following spi-  
 rited passages deserve to be selected. “Let popery be as  
 “black as ye will, call it Belzebub, if ye please. It is  
 “not by Belzebub, that I am for casting out Belzebub,  
 “but by the spirit of God. We exclaim against popery;

“ and in exclaiming against it, we betray but too mani-  
 “ festly, that we have imbibed of the spirit for which we  
 “ detest it. In the most unlovely spirit of popery, and  
 “ with the unhallowed arms of popery, we would fight  
 “ against popery. It is not by such weapons that God  
 “ hath promised to consume the man of sin, but by the  
 “ breath of his mouth, that is his word.”—“ Christians,  
 “ in ancient times, confided in the divine promises ; we,  
 “ in these days, confide in acts of parliament.” “ God’s  
 “ promises do well enough when the legislature is their  
 “ surety.” “ Let me tell those people so distrustful in  
 “ God’s promises, and so confident in the arm of flesh,  
 “ that true religion never flourished so much, never  
 “ spread so rapidly, as when, instead of persecuting, it  
 “ was persecuted, instead of obtaining support from hu-  
 “ man sanctions, it had all the terrors of the magistrate  
 “ and the laws armed against it.” Thus Dr. Campbell  
 gave to his countrymen a very strong evidence of the  
 liberality of his mind, with respect to those who differed  
 from him in opinion ; and as his aversion to popery, and  
 the bad treatment that he had received from some roman  
 catholics, were very well known, he acted a generous  
 and manly part in publishing this address.

The same year he published a sermon on the happy in-  
 fluence of religion on civil society, which was preached at  
 the assizes at Aberdeen. In this valuable discourse he  
 shows, in a very satisfactory manner, that “ religion is  
 “ highly conducive to the exaltation and felicity of the  
 “ body politic, (or nation) by the tendency and extent  
 “ of its laws ; by the assistance which it gives to the civil  
 “ powers, both in securing fidelity and in discovering  
 “ truth ; by the nature and importance of its sanctions ;  
 “ and by the positive enforcement of equity and good go-

" vernalment on the rulers, and of obedience and sub-  
 " mission on the people." He concludes this discourse  
 with two reflections. The first is, that " the secular  
 " powers ought to give all possible countenance to reli-  
 " gion, as the principal support of their authority, and to  
 " the ordinances of divine worship, the principal external  
 " means by which a sense of religion is propagated and  
 " preserved among mankind." The second inference is  
 written in such masterly language, that though this dis-  
 course was both preached and published many years before  
 the late convulsions in Europe, one would almost think  
 that he had seen, with a prophetic eye, the baneful effects  
 of throwing off all regard to religion. " If religion,"  
 says he, " is of such indispensable necessity for the sup-  
 " port of civil society, what shall we think of the pa-  
 " triotism, or public virtue, of those who assiduously  
 " endeavour, as far as their influence extends, to under-  
 " mine its fundamental principles, and set men loose from  
 " all its obligations? Do not such appear to be as real  
 " enemies to their country as to christianity? Some per-  
 " haps would not scruple to add enemies to human na-  
 " ture. Let people but coolly ask themselves if our free-  
 " thinkers, our speculative and philosophical latitudina-  
 " rians, should succeed in the dark design, they seem  
 " sometimes so zealously to prosecute, and if the disbelief  
 " of the principles, and the disregard of the rules of re-  
 " ligion, which already appear in too many, and plainly  
 " show their evil influence on the morals of the age,  
 " should, agreeably to the ordinary course of things, de-  
 " scend to the lowest ranks, and become universal, what  
 " will be the consequence? Who can hesitate to answer  
 " the utter fall of religion? Let it not be pretended, that  
 " there is no danger from the reasonings of sceptics, be-  
 " cause

“ cause they are far above the comprehension of vulgar  
“ understandings. For those men will fondly adopt the  
“ conclusion, who are incapable of apprehending aught  
“ of the premises. The authority of great names among  
“ the learned will ever be to them a sufficient foundation ;  
“ and if once our faith is subverted, is any so blind as to  
“ imagine that religion will fall alone ? Can her disgrace  
“ fail to be accompanied by that of virtue and good man-  
“ ners ? In such a general ruin who will be safe ? Can  
“ we be vain enough to imagine, that our laws and liber-  
“ ties, or any part of the constitution, will long survive ?  
“ The subject is too full of horror to expatiate on. I  
“ leave it to the serious reflections of my hearers.” The  
importance of this quotation, which is the concluding pa-  
ragraph of this excellent discourse, will be an apology for  
its length.

It may be wondered, that we have not more discourses  
from this eloquent preacher. But it has already been  
mentioned, that he did not often write sermons. Those,  
however, which he did compose, were highly finished ;  
and the writer of this account has heard as many of these  
discourses as would make up a volume. They were  
chiefly occasional discourses, most of them being preached  
at the administration of the Lord's supper. It is hoped  
that they will yet be published.

The last work, which Dr. Campbell lived to publish,  
was his translation of the gospels, with preliminary dis-  
sertations and explanatory notes, in two quarto volumes.  
He once intended to have translated the whole New Tes-  
tament, and more lately resolved to translate the Acts of  
the Apostles, so as to complete the history of the publica-  
tion of the gospel ; but he gave up all thoughts of both  
these attempts sometime before he died. What he has



done, however, is a most valuable work. His preliminary dissertations are universally allowed to be some of the finest pieces of criticism, which modern times have produced. In them, without seeming to take notice of any controversies, he has, in fact, settled many of these religious disputes; and he has laid down the principles by which several other controverted articles may be cleared up and determined. His explanation of heresy and schism, which had never been so well explained before, is an evidence of great critical acumen joined to uncommon liberality of mind. It is to be regretted, however, that those dissertations were not published some considerable time before his translation. For the minds of men, even of learned men, would have been better prepared for judging of the latter, after they had read and maturely considered the former. The explanatory notes are allowed to be very valuable, and both tend to support his version, and throw light on many disputed passages. (Though many of these might be selected as specimens of the rest, we shall only refer the reader to a curious note on John v, 18; where he will find acute discernment, accurate criticism, and a happy vein of humour. The subject indirectly handled is Madan's Thelyphthora.)

The translation given by Dr. Campbell is generally admitted to be a very good one: but its merit is not sufficiently understood. As the preliminary dissertations have tended to settle many disputes, so the translation has removed many difficulties, by the substitution of a single plain word, for an expression of doubtful or equivocal import. For example, the *reign of God*, instead of the *kingdom of God* in the common translation, is a correct version of the original greek expression, and prevents all mistakes which have arisen from mistranslating that expression.



pression which denotes *both* *reign* and *kingdom*. Thus also *reform* and *reformation* express the meaning of the greek original, as well as is done by the english translations *repent* and *repentance* in our common version. These last words are of very doubtful import, many ordinary readers supposing, that they chiefly denote sorrow or remorse for sin. But all this difficulty vanishes; and a precise meaning, free of all ambiguity, even to an unlearned man, is conveyed by the word *reformation*. It deserves here to be particularly stated, that this version of Dr. Campbell's is perfectly impartial. Was there ever a translation, in which there appeared so little attachment to any system, party, or preconceived opinions? Did ever any translator show a greater desire to convey the *mind of the spirit*, without adopting the language of any sect? And is it possible to know to what denomination of christians he belonged by reading his Translation of the Gospels?

It is not however to be denied, that many worthy and learned men have wished, that he had amended the old translation, rather than given one of his own entirely new. Here also it must be acknowledged, that our common translation, both from its intrinsic value, and from our being accustomed to read it, has preoccupied our minds in some degree, and has acquired a veneration both from private christians and from well-informed divines. And it may also be observed, that this translation is very pure in point of expression and style, considering the period in which it was made, also that it has tended very much to preserve our language in that purity for nearly 200 years, and by this means has kept it stationary, and rendered it more easy to foreigners to acquire the english tongue. But in order to know the value of Dr. Campbell's translation,

b 3

translation, the writer of this account requests, that the reader would peruse a whole section, or a whole gospel, of that work, then read as much of the common translation, and afterwards say, which of the two, on the whole, has the best effect on his mind. He is convinced, from his own experience, that the former would have the advantage. Let the reader next, for this also has been done, read over, with attention, a considerable part of Dr. Campbell's translation, comparing every separate verse, or sentence, both with the original, and with the common version, and he will find throughout, in the apprehension of this writer, and of others, who have, in this manner, compared the whole, new and unnoticed truths, in so many minute particulars, that it is at least doubtful, whether these could have been expressed, with any reasonable degree of propriety, by only correcting the old translation.

We ought not to omit mentioning, on this subject, that Dr. Campbell has been charged with using some uncouth, or at least uncommon, phrases in his translation ; and that a list of these was drawn up by the authors of a literary review, which is deservedly held in great repute. But it must also be remarked, that Dr. Campbell paid very particular attention to *precision* of language in all his criticisms, and that he *wished* to give the most *faithful* translation that he possibly could give of the Holy Scriptures. He frequently told his particular friends, before the translation was published, that he *felt himself obliged* to give that version which was most *faithful*, though not the most elegant. And he also complained, (such was his nice discrimination between the import of words) that he could not always find, in the English language, an expression which exactly corresponded to the Greek original ; and said, that in this case he was obliged to approximate,

or

or come as near as possible, to the meaning of the word, or phrase, used by the inspired writer. It ought also to be considered, that Dr. Campbell wished, by this work, to call the attention of mankind to a new translation, rather than proposed to exhibit his own as a faultless version.

Besides his sermons, divinity prelections, and different publications, there is yet one part of his public character as a clergyman, that deserves to be considered, viz. the appearance he made when offering up public prayers. As there is no liturgy in the established church of Scotland, there is, in this respect, a wonderful diversity among the different Scotch preachers. It does not admit of a doubt, that in times of civil commotion, the clergy of that church possess great power, or may have very considerable influence on the minds of the people, by having the public prayers expressed in such language as they themselves choose to adopt, when speaking as the mouths of their respective congregations. This was frequently, and sometimes fatally, experienced during the civil wars in the last century. But even on ordinary occasions, a public speaker, who is a man of piety, finds, that independently of the duty of this part of worship, a good prayer has all the effect, which a great orator proposes to produce by the exordium, or introduction, of his discourse, *reddere auditores benevolos, attentos, dociles*;—to conciliate the good-will of his hearers, to raise their attention, and to make them willing to receive instruction. It is also true, that in the last age, some preachers used too much freedom in their expressions, and that of late years a vile fusion, or language loaded with epithets, has been sometimes used in public prayers. But this pious and learned man always rose up with great modesty and humility, and offered up public prayers in that simple language, which is

characteristic of true devotion, avoiding all pompous expressions, and all technical phrases, or words, which are used in religious controversy, (and which mark the sectary rather than become the christian, when speaking to his God) often warming the hearts of his hearers with the piety of his sentiments, but always expressing those sentiments with the greatest simplicity, and humble, though elevated, devotion.

As piety, when united to benevolence, always renders learning and genius most beneficial to mankind, it deserves here to be added, that this worthy man, when called upon to visit and to pray with persons in distress, seldom failed to soothe their minds by his tender sympathy, and by expressions of pious resignation and warm devotion; especially when any uncommon situation occasioned an application for his friendly assistance. He was not above listening to the calls of humanity, when made by the poorest of his hearers. And not to mention many other cases, his prayers with a lady, whose husband had died suddenly, and under peculiarly afflicting circumstances,—and with one of his colleagues, a very promising young man, who was dying of a fever, were examples of that sublime devotion, which genius can offer up only when inspired by piety—had a very uncommon effect upon all who heard them—and did as much honour to his heart, as his other learned works did credit to his understanding.

It might be thought a great omission, if we neglected to state his conduct in the church courts of the Scotch establishment; and it is with pleasure we observe, that though he did not live to write any lecture on this subject, to deliver to his students, his own example was a continued and valuable prelection. In all great questions, he belonged to what is called the *moderate party* in the church; and



generally supported the laws of the state with respect to patronage. Some of his speeches in the General Assembly displayed so much knowledge, discovered so much liberality, and were delivered with so much animation, that they will not soon be forgotten by any who heard them. Dr. Campbell, however, in private causes, and in some incidental public questions, did not always follow the leader of the moderate party. He was particularly scrupulous in his judgment upon the moral character of clergymen, avoiding, on the one hand, to conceive a rash prejudice against an unfortunate brother, and on the other hand, to screen an unworthy man from punishment, or even to stifle an enquiry into his conduct, where this was suspicious. He refused to be moderator of the General Assembly, or to allow his name to be mentioned with a view to his being elected to this dignity; and as from his strictness of principle, and inflexible integrity, he would neither give up his own opinion, nor attempt to make any other person embrace that opinion, otherwise than by supporting it by strong arguments, he was often in the minority in the inferior church courts. But that circumstance gave him no uneasiness, as he uniformly acted from principle, and neither feared nor courted any person. Indeed, he had too much native candour, and too great elevation of mind, to be what the world calls a politician; and really was not qualified, had he attempted it, to be the leader of a party. For he would not renounce his opinion, except upon conviction—he would not ask a vote in a matter of right and wrong—and he would not make those concessions, which leaders of parties are, in some cases, obliged to make, in order to conciliate, or to preserve, the affections of their partizans. Yet, by the mere force of his arguments, he sometimes gave a turn to the sentiments of  
the



the inferior courts, and prevented things, which he thought improper, from being carried by a party. Here his influence was that of character and abilities, without his assuming any superiority, or desiring to bring other men over to his sentiments by any other means than the mere force of his reasoning. Indeed, he was so able a master in argument, that when he was once roused, and had entered keenly into the merits of a question, most men were afraid to enter the lists with him in a dispute. He always possessed an independent mind, standing on his own ground, and never asking support from his friends. Yet, when he rose to speak, both members and spectators paid him the greatest respect and attention. At first, when he had not previously meditated on the subject, he seemed to wander from the question, while he was laying down his premises; but he soon corrected himself, or showed, that he had not lost sight of the article in dispute. And in matters of reasoning, instead of conning over a prepared speech, and of retailing, in a public court, arguments which he had formerly collected and arranged in private, an attentive hearer could observe the whole train of sentiment in his mind, and distinctly mark the succession of his ideas; and an impartial man was insensibly carried along with him till convinced by his arguments. In no case did he appear to more advantage, than when answering the prepared speech of another man. He saw at once into the fallacy of an argument; and was not more remarkable for proceeding slowly and cautiously while reasoning himself, than for exposing quickly and smartly the false argumentation of other men. His perspicacity here was wonderful; and it distinguished him from the other members of court, indeed from mankind in general, more than either his great genius, or extensive reading, could have done. Genius is  
rare,

rare, erudition not very common; but perspicacity, or the union of quickness of perception with deep penetration, is a talent which is still more rarely found in any person; and, especially when joined to such integrity, is far more valuable than either genius or learning.

His opinions and character in private life come now to be considered.

In all opinions concerning revealed religion, he was a most sincere christian, who, by extensive reading in general, and by a careful perusal of the holy scriptures in particular, had confirmed his own faith in the christian revelation. But this conviction, on the mind of Dr. Campbell, was widely different from the mere prejudices of education in favour of christianity, entertained by a man who has never examined its evidences. It was almost as much different from the shallow reasoning of a Rousseau, and the ill applied wit of a Voltaire, (neither of whom were capable of thinking deeply, or arguing closely) and from the prejudices against christianity, which are entertained by those modern free-thinkers, who neither possess the sensibility of the former, nor the wit of the latter. In Britain, if revelation cannot boast of a Hume, she can glory in a Campbell, as an able champion, as well as a firm believer.

In giving a more particular account of the opinions of this learned divine, it is proper to make a few distinctions, or selections. He highly disapproved of the modern socialians, or rationalists, as they call themselves, who attempt to explain away the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. On the other hand, though satisfied, in his own mind, of the truth of the essential doctrines of christianity, he also disapproved of certain abstruse questions concerning the trinity, the *nature* of Christ's satisfaction, and such like

contro-

controversies. He considered the proposing of these questions as arguing great presumption, and the contending about them, and the defining them very particularly, as always improper, and sometimes perhaps even impious. He was by no means fond of controversial divinity, though an able disputant. His own zeal was as much kindled by making any striking observation on the character of Christ, by discovering any beauty in the inspired writings, which had not been formerly noticed, or by throwing any new light on a precept of the gospel, as the mind of a zealot could be pleased with a new argument in favour of any article of controversy, or of a sectary on getting a new convert added to his party. He was uncommonly liberal to those who differed from him in religious opinions; so liberal, indeed, that he did not approve of considering some modern writers as infidels, who profess to be christians, though they have written rather freely on certain articles. He thought that this was doing too much honour to infidelity, and driving such persons, who, with great abilities, might have keen resentments, to throw off all regard to revelation. In his own conduct, or intercourse, with men who entertained notions of religion, which he considered as erroneous, he would neither officiously offer to make any converts, nor proudly refuse to reason with any one, who was desirous of information, and open to conviction. He proceeded, with great caution, in forming his own opinion upon any subject; and, without suspecting the veracity, or good sense, of others, took nothing upon trust; but even in matters of science, wished to consider every thing himself. He was extremely candid as a judge of sermons; and was very shy in giving his opinion of a preacher, except in a private conversation with

with the person himself, where his remarks were free, yet made with great delicacy.

During a considerable part of his life, and before he was chosen professor of divinity, he was less studious than he had been in his early years: but upon his election to the divinity chair, he studied with close application. Few men husbanded time more, or allowed themselves less relaxation. Intervals, between public meetings, or hours of business, which are commonly given to recreation, he generally employed in study. He usually rose by five in the morning, and was engaged in study, in one shape or other, till twelve at night, excepting when called to meals, interrupted by company, or engaged in other duties. He wrote incomparably more after his appointment to the professorship, at the age of fifty-two, than he had done in all the preceding part of his life. And when nearly seventy years old, by the help of a grammar, and a dictionary, he studied, with success, the German language, in order that he might be able to read Luther's version of the New Testament. He divided his time; part of the day being spent in reading, or collating, and the other part being spent in writing. It was very fortunate for the students of divinity, and certainly very beneficial to the interests of sacred literature, and to the reputation of Dr. Campbell, that he was elected to the office of professor of divinity. For his intellectual faculties were greater than his active powers; and he required a little spur to make him exert his abilities; but when he was properly called to action, by a sense of duty, or of character, no man could bestow more intense application, or act with greater assiduity or perseverance. Yet it was a singular feature in his character, that he was not in the least uneasy, when he was sud-



suddenly interrupted in the course of his studies. He would, with the greatest good humour, pass from the collating of ancient versions to the company of a few young people, not only without seeming to be discomposed, but with that hilarity of countenance, and pleasantness of manners, which rendered him always an acceptable companion to such a society. Under this article, it may also be noted, that he kept a meteorological account of time, for philosophical purposes, and as was supposed by some, in order to excite and keep up an attentive state of mind.

In conversation, his wit often appeared to great advantage; but it was mixed with so much pleasantry and good humour, that no person could be displeased, even when he was the subject of this delicate raillery; and though extremely well bred, he was apt to laugh very freely, when any ludicrous story was told, or any ridiculous thing happened in company. From his being much absorbed in reflection, he was sometimes a little absent; but in general he was very attentive to his guests, was an agreeable companion to those whom he visited; was very fond of conversing with young people; and he could, from the sweetness of his temper, and condescending manners, render himself agreeable even to young children. He had a particular talent in conveying important instructions in an easy natural way, without the appearance of instructing, and when he seemed only to have in view the amusement of his hearers. Even a common sentiment was often brought out by him in such a manner as could not fail to give pleasure to a man of discernment; for what he said was not the offspring of memory, but of invention. Men of detail and anecdote might sometimes shine more in conversation: he spoke with naiveté, and sometimes with



with hesitation ; but his hearers were often agreeably surprised at the happy manner in which he related a common incident.

In matters of mere opinion, he generally expressed himself in mild language to those who differed from him in sentiment. Yet when any person behaved himself very rudely in company, he had a singular art of saying the strongest things, and of conveying the severest reproofs, in very genteel expressions.

In general, he was a man of a mild disposition, and even temper, and was not much subject to passion ; but when once he was roused, he became warm and animated in a very high degree : yet an acknowledgment of an offence was always followed by his ready and complete forgiveness. A mere difference in opinion did not inspire him with the least personal animosity, even in the most animated debate. But when any insinuations were thrown out against his veracity, or candour, he defended himself in such a way, as that no man, who had once attacked him, would choose to do so on another occasion.

The most prominent feature, in his moral character, was his love of truth. No man was ever more strict in speaking truth ; and the least deviation from it was accompanied with the strongest marks of his disapprobation. It was by paying this strict regard to truth and principle, that he strengthened the powers of his understanding, while he preserved his virtue uncorrupted. For though a regard to truth cannot create or produce genius, yet it wonderfully corroborates the powers of the understanding. The man who perverts his reason, or bends it to support a falsehood, even if he have genius and abilities, becomes only a sophist ; and though he may sometimes impose upon others, always lands in self-deception. But a man of equal genius

and talents, who employs all the powers of his understanding only in searching after or defending truth, braces the faculties of his mind, as well as preserves his virtue. In this case, whether the reason, even of a man of genius, shall resemble an oak, or an osier, depends on always adhering to truth, and never bending to power, or acting contrary to conviction. The man, who would be qualified for answering such a writer as Mr. Hume, must have that love of truth, which was possessed by Dr. Campbell.

In private life, he was a most affectionate husband, and a steady friend to those few whom he honoured with his friendship. He had none of those peculiarities by which learned men either are, or affect to be, distinguished from others. He lived for many years on an intimate footing with a few select friends, who, before his election to the professorship, shared much of his society. He had very few, if any, enemies; for he took no concern in borough politics, or in private quarrels. Yet, in the management of the different public and charitable institutions in the city of Aberdeen, to a share in the direction of which he was called by his offices, it was by all persons admitted, that he acted an attentive, conscientious, and manly part, becoming an intelligent and independent mind.

He was of a very delicate constitution, and was subject to violent periodical colics, though very remarkable for his temperance. Having once discovered, that abstinence from food, for a day or more, was the best remedy for these complaints, he would never take any medicine, till he was seized with that illness, which he had about five years before his death. Yet, in consequence of these periodical complaints, and this singular regimen, he kept free of all other diseases. In this situation, it was not to

be wondered, that he had rather a mean opinion of the medical art ; but this candid man, who was always open to conviction, not only called in the aid of physicians, when he was seized with that illness, but having once received benefit from them, he ever after placed the most implicit confidence in one of these gentlemen, and even consulted him when he had the slightest complaint.

His stature was below the middle size ; and he stooped much in his old age. But he had a fine open countenance, a significant index of his candid mind ; very regular features, which were marked with lines of thought ; and a most piercing eye, which indicated his uncommon natural perspicacity. Lavater, if the principles of his art be well founded, would have pronounced him a man of great candour, correct observation, and deep penetration. But to return from these sketches to his history.

When he was seized with the severe illness above-mentioned, Mrs. Campbell attended him with such assiduity, as much injured her own constitution. His life was despaired of, but he was perfectly resigned ; and indeed rather surprised at his recovery. He said to the writer of this account, when he began to recover a little, “ I thought  
“ that I was going on my long journey since I saw you  
“ last ; and indeed I must soon expect to do so, for I am  
“ now in my 72d year, and I feel that the powers of my  
“ nature are fast giving way.”

It may be proper to relate, in this place, a particular conversation on the subject of revealed religion, which this sincere christian, and learned divine, had with a friend, at a time when he believed that he was dying. It is the more necessary to insert this conversation, as the disease, of which he died, deprived him from the first of all power of speech. The writer of this account shall relate this in

the words of the Reverend Dr. David Cruden, who had been Dr. Campbell's co-presbyter for 22 years, and on a very intimate footing with him during a considerable part of that time.

“ Aberdeen, Sunday evening, January 23, 1791. Visiting Dr. Campbell, on being informed of his sickness, I found him very ill, and thinking that his disorder would bring on death. Taking my hand, he complained of pain over his whole body; thought, that as there was not the least hope of his recovery to be actively useful, it would be good for him to depart; and indeed, in his present state, he wished to be dismissed. With respect to *another world*, in a short quick manner, proceeding from modesty, he said, *he had hope, good hope*. Upon his mentioning, that he was apprehensive he might become impatient, and unable to sustain his trouble, if it should be prolonged—he was put in mind, that he had often recommended it to others to fear, and to distrust themselves, as the safest part for frail mortals; that God would surely regard a creature paying respect to him by such conduct; and that he who had helped him hitherto, and sustained him through life, in which he had seen many trying scenes, would help him still, and not leave him at the last. He acknowledged the justness of these sentiments, and seemed to feel their influence. It was suggested to him, that formerly there had been appointed to him an active part, which he had long, and with assiduity, fulfilled; but that he now was called to go through a passive part, which might equally glorify God. The beneficial purposes to his fellow-men, which his labours had served, were mentioned as affording a pleasing reflection. He was sensible of this, *acknowledging the goodness of God, who had enabled* him



“ him to diffuse some divine truth. He said, *he had differed, in several points, from many ; but he could say ; he had differed from a conviction in his own mind upon evidence.* He renounced all meritorious sense of *his enquiries, or exertions,* and said, any talents that he had for investigating truth came from the source of wisdom and light. He asked me to pray with him, quitting my hand, which he had sometimes pressed from sensibility while he spake. After prayer, he again took my hand, and pressed it with more force, saying, *God has been pleased to give me some understanding of his promises in the gospel of his son Jesus Christ. These I have communicated to others in my life. I now entertain the faith and hope of them ; and this may be considered as the testimony of a dying man.* This he spoke with a higher elevation of voice, and in a very feeling manner, insomuch, that from the ardour of his mind exciting him to speak more strongly than what his feeble frame could bear, and from the exertion on the occasion, it was wished by silence to lead him to finish the conversation.”

The importance of this conference will justify the writer of this account for giving it at full length. The friends of religion will read this testimony with pleasure ; and even some freethinkers, who are not yet hardened in infidelity, may derive some advantage from the solemn declaration, made under the immediate prospect of death, by a christian divine, whose deep erudition, and strong powers of reason, the boldest infidel will not pretend to call in question.

Dr. Campbell, however, contrary to his own expectation, and to the opinion of his friends, got the better of this severe illness ; and, though with impaired strength,



resumed his former occupations and studies. But he soon met with a very great affliction.—

This was the death of Mrs. Campbell ; and was a heavy stroke to her husband. In her he lost all that he could lose in one person.

After her death, he avoided all public business, and ceased to attend the meetings of the church courts. Yet he still preached occasionally, though he had an assistant ; and one of the most eloquent sermons that he ever delivered, was preached by him, on the Sunday evening, after administering the sacrament, the first time that he had appeared in the pulpit since the death of Mrs. Campbell. This great and good man, who had so much command of his passions, and talked very easily of his own death, was deeply shaken with the death of his beloved consort. His distress was evident to all his hearers ; and who would not have felt for Dr. Campbell in such a situation ?

He, from this time, employed himself in correcting those parts of his works which he had already published, and in preparing for the press those prelections on church-history, which are now given to the world. But he felt the powers of his nature were much weakened, though he enjoyed a tolerably good state of health, and was still as usual employed in study.

It is proper to state, in this place, that he gave a remarkable proof of his disinterestedness some years before he died. This was his offer, unsolicited by any person, to resign the office of professor of divinity, provided any one of three gentlemen, whom he named, and to whom he applied for their consent, were chosen to succeed him. The offer was not accepted of by the patrons of the professorship ; therefore, he continued to hold the office, lest an improper person should, in his life-time, be chosen as

his successor. But afterwards, application was made to him, and also to the town-council of Aberdeen, (the patrons of the professorship) in favour of Dr. William Laurence Brown, late minister of the English church, and professor of moral philosophy, of the law of nature, and of ecclesiastical history, in the university of Utrecht. This gentleman had been driven from these offices by the French invasion of Holland, on account of his attachment to the House of Orange, and his native country; and because, by some of his writings \*, he had opposed the progress of French principles, and maintained the cause of religion. Dr. Campbell, knowing his character, and being certified of these circumstances, instantly resigned the offices of professor of divinity, and minister of Gray Friars church, which were worth 160*l.* a year. On the 11th of June, 1795, he wrote the following letter of resignation to the Moderator of the Presbytery of Aberdeen, which that reverend court heard read, with the strongest marks of sensibility in every person who was present, and which they appointed to be inserted in their records, as an evidence of their respect for Dr. Campbell.

*Aberdeen, June 11, 1795.*

“ Reverend and dear Sir,

“ I HEREBY intimate to you, and to the Reverend  
“ Presbytery of Aberdeen, that I henceforth resign my  
“ charge of Professor of Divinity in Marischal Collège,  
“ and Minister of Gray Friars church, into the hands of  
“ the Presbytery, whom I entreat to declare me released

\* The writings of Dr. Brown particularly obnoxious to the French, and their partisans, were an *Essay on the Folly of Scepticism*, another on the *natural Equality of Man*, and a *Sermon on the Signs of the Times*.

“ in future from these functions, and the pastoral relation  
 “ implied in them loosed.

“ The causes of my making this resignation are the  
 “ following :—

“ 1st, I am sensible of such a decline, both in body and  
 “ in mind, as unfits me, in a considerable degree, for the  
 “ discharge of the duties incumbent, in a way which  
 “ either would be satisfactory to myself, or (as I much  
 “ fear) profitable to those for whom my services are  
 “ chiefly intended.

“ 2dly, It is my firm opinion, that when a man is con-  
 “ scious that he is no longer able to perform properly the  
 “ duties of an office, and is providentially in a situation  
 “ of living independently of its emoluments, it is an indis-  
 “ pensable duty to resign, that a fit person may be timely  
 “ found to supply the place, for the sake of the commu-  
 “ nity at large, that the public may not suffer, compared  
 “ with which, the accommodation of the incumbent is,  
 “ and ought always to be, regarded as but a secondary  
 “ consideration at the most. This I do more readily in  
 “ the present case, as the patron will have no difficulty in  
 “ supplying the charge, about to be vacated, in such time,  
 “ as that the divinity-school shall suffer nothing. There  
 “ is no ann \*, and consequently, no claim for vacant sti-  
 “ pend, to occasion a delay after a resignation as after a  
 “ decease.

“ I hope I shall not be misunderstood by any to mean,  
 “ by this deed, a resignation of the character of a minister  
 “ of the gospel, and servant of Christ. In this character  
 “ I glory, so far am I from intending to resign it but with

\* The ann, or annate, is the half year's salary, payable after a mi-  
 nister's or professor's death.

“ my breath ; nor do I mean to retain it only as a title.  
 “ For if, by the blessing of God, I should yet be able to  
 “ do any real service, either in defence, or in illustration,  
 “ of the christian cause, I shall think it my honour, as  
 “ well as my duty, and the highest gratification of which  
 “ I am capable, to be so employed. It is only from the  
 “ particular relation to the people of Aberdeen, as pastor,  
 “ and the theological students of Marischal College, as  
 “ teacher, that it is my desire to be loosed. And let me  
 “ add, this proceeds not from dislike to the particular ser-  
 “ vice of either, (for I have had much enjoyment in both,  
 “ and have the most ardent wishes for the welfare of  
 “ both) but from a conviction of unfitness, owing to age,  
 “ and growing infirmities, and from a fervent desire and  
 “ hope, that in regard to both, the place shall soon be  
 “ better supplied.

“ I beg leave to offer my best respects to my brethren  
 “ of the presbytery, and most thankful acknowledgments  
 “ for all the marks of attention, with which, in their pub-  
 “ lic capacity as a community, or any of the members in-  
 “ dividually, have been pleased to honour me. May  
 “ power, accompanied with divine favour, ever attend  
 “ them, and may they enjoy much of that greatest of all  
 “ pleasures to a faithful pastor, to perceive, by the fruits  
 “ produced in their people, that their labours have not  
 “ been in vain in the Lord.

“ I very sincerely am,

“ Reverend and dear Sir,

“ Your affectionate brother in the Lord,

“ And most humble servant,

“ GEORGE CAMPBELL.”

“ Moderator of the Presbytery

“ of Aberdeen.”



The value of this letter is such, that the writer of this account would have been highly culpable, if he had neglected to insert it at full length. It gives a clear and full view of that illustrious man, when taking farewvell of his brethren, though it was not written with any view of being published. The presbytery accepted of his resignation, and sent a deputation of their members, to ask that he would, though free from his relation to them, come when he was able to attend their meetings, and favour them with his opinion and advice.

In this manner Dr. Campbell resigned his professorship of divinity; and instead of being uneasy at seeing his successor, as is too common with old men, he heard him preach his admission sermon, contracted a stronger intimacy with him, during the winter which preceded his death, than could naturally have been expected from so short an acquaintance, and was frequently heard to say, that he felt much pleasure in Dr. Brown's appointment.

Soon after his resignation of the professorship, government, desirous of testifying, in a public manner, the high respect so justly entertained for his abilities and services, offered him, on condition of resigning the principalship of Marischal College, a pension of 300*l.* a year. Dr. Campbell, who did not desire a pension as a matter of emolument, accepted this mark of his Majesty's munificence, as a testimony of public respect, and was succeeded in the office of principal also by Dr. Brown.

He enjoyed this pension only a few months: yet he continued writing till within a week of his death. He talked both of that event, and of the resignation of his offices, with great equanimity, and sometimes with good-humour. He said once to the writer of this account, "I was unwilling, at first, to resign the office of princi-

pal,



“pal, as I could make a shift to discharge all its duties.  
“But I have done it now; and as I must soon resign all  
“my offices, it was as well to do it voluntarily.” So  
easily did this good man speak of his approaching dissolu-  
tion.

This event was now at no great distance: for on the  
31st of March, 1796, he was discovered to be very uneasy,  
when sitting with his friends in the afternoon. In a few  
hours he recovered, and was next day at his desk as usual,  
though he complained, that he could not write easily, and  
that his hand-writing, which was very distinct formerly,  
had then become scarcely legible. Next morning, he was  
seized with a stroke of palsy, which deprived him of  
the power of speech, and under which he languished till  
he died. Excepting frequent attempts to speak, he showed  
no other marks of sensibility. But he had long accus-  
tomed himself to *prepare for death*. He had, in his for-  
mer illness, given the *testimony* of a dying man in favour  
of religion; and therefore, it was no injury, but a blessing  
to him, that he did not *feel* the last pangs of dissolving  
nature\*.

Thus lived, wrote, and died, Dr. George Campbell.  
His character may be thus summed up in a few sentences.  
His imagination was lively and fertile—his understanding  
equally acute and vigorous—and his erudition was at once  
very deep and wonderfully diversified. His piety was un-  
feigned—his morals unimpeached—his temper cheerful—

\* A sermon, on occasion of his death, was preached by Dr. Brown,  
on the 17th day of April, and published at the desire of the professors  
of Marischal College, and several others of the most respectable  
hearers. It contains a sketch of Dr. Campbell's character, as a pub-  
lic teacher, as the head of a public seminary of learning, and as a pri-  
vate christian.

and his manners gentle and unassuming. His love of truth was even more remarkable than the uncommon success with which he sought after it. Where intuitive faculties could be of service to any man, he saw at once if he saw at all. But his deep perspicacity was not satisfied with a superficial view of any thing :—his piercing eye darted to the bottom of every subject, to which discernment could be applied. Where study and reflection were necessary, he could bestow as much time on patient thinking, as if he had been possessed of no genius at all, and had acquired only a small share of erudition. And when once he began to examine any subject, he was never satisfied till he had viewed it in every light in which it could be seen. He always sought for truth in the love of truth—but he could not bear to be suspected of deviating from it; for he neither courted those who might support, nor feared those who did oppose him. The tone of his mind was high, and he would not let it down from the elevation of truth and of virtue. Whether engaged in conversation, or employed in study, he could pass easily from the lightest subject to the most serious one. And the reach of his mind was so great, as to comprehend a great variety of subjects. He could explore the causes of that pleasure, which arises in the mind, from dramatic entertainments, and lay down the rules of scripture criticism. He could illustrate the whole theory of evidence, or detect the false reasonings of Mr. Hume. He could explain the spirit of the gospel, marking the extremes of superstition and enthusiasm; and both as a philosopher, and a divine, declare the nature, extent, and importance, of the duty of allegiance. While he zealously contended for the faith, he could warn the christian against imbibing a persecuting spirit; and yet show the influence of religion upon civil society,

society, warning his countrymen against infidelity, before they had seen its dreadful effects. He could, with manly eloquence, describe the success of the fishermen of Galilee, while preaching the doctrine of the cross to prejudiced Jews, learned Greeks, and ambitious Romans;—and at the same time, with well applied erudition, he could delineate the characters of the pretended successors of the apostles, and trace the progress of the hierarchy through all the dark and middle ages, until the reformation of religion. As the principal of a college, a professor of divinity, or a minister of the gospel—as a true patriot, a good man, and a sincere christian—*Quando ullum invenies purem?*

Reader! Dost thou feel an united sentiment of pleasure, and of virtuous emulation, excited in thy soul by this imperfect account? Lay the foundations of knowledge deep in thy mind, and call forth into action all the powers which God has given thee. If thou hast not that perspicacity which was the distinguishing feature of this great man's intellectual character, thou mayst possess, in an equal degree, that love of truth, which was the discriminating trait of his moral character. And the love of truth shall brace all the powers of thy mind, while thy piety shall add much to thy genius, and thy patience shall assist thee in acquiring erudition. If thou art not placed in an elevated station, thou still canst be conscientious in discharging the duties of thine office. If thy name is not recorded in the annals of fame, it shall be written in the book of life. If thou shalt catch the mantle of this good man, who is taken from thee, thou shalt obtain, at least, some portion of his spirit;—and if thou dost imitate his virtues, thou shalt meet with him in the kingdom of God.

*Manse of Keith-Hall,*  
Nov. 28, 1799.

GEORGE SKENE KEITH.

## GENERAL VIEW OF DR. CAMPBELL'S PRELECTIONS IN THEOLOGY.

In this paper, all that is aimed at is to give the outlines of his plan; to throw into a sentence of enumeration, where this can conveniently be done, every separate branch of it, to select a few of the most striking particulars, and to insert, in notes below, those articles which could not properly be included in the text, and which, from their great importance, ought to be given as nearly as possible in the words of Dr. Campbell.

He divided the study of theology into two principal heads, viz. *theory* and *practice*. By the theory he meant *all that was necessary to be understood* by a young man *in point of knowledge*; by the practice all that was *necessary* either for a minister of a parish or a student of divinity, to *enable him to make a proper application of that knowledge*, so as to render it most beneficial to others and most satisfactory to his own mind.

Under the first head, or theory, he included sacred or church history, sacred criticism, and polemic divinity; Under the second head, or practice, he included pulpit eloquence, propriety of character in *private* life, or teaching by example, and propriety of character in *public* life, or a proper discharge of public duties, viz. catechising, preaching, public worship, and administering the sacraments; as also a faithful discharge of a minister's duty, as a member of the church courts of the scotch establishment.

He declared, as to the manner of executing this plan, that the time, to which he had limited himself, would not  
allow



allow him to be tedious, or very minute, in treating all those different subjects.

On the first branch of the theory, viz. sacred or church history, he delivered those prelections, which he afterwards prepared for the press, and to which this account of his life is prefixed. Those lectures being written over several times, and composed with very great attention, were considered by the students as the most finished part of the whole course, and being very entertaining as well as instructive, were particularly distinguished by those who heard them delivered. They were much pleased with his liberality in acknowledging, that the disputes about church government were not in the least connected with the essentials of religion; that, in his opinion, no existing form of church polity exactly corresponds with that of the primitive church, and that perhaps none was proper for all ages and nations; yet they were much instructed by his well digested learning, and highly entertained with the rise and progress of episcopacy, and even of the hierarchy, from the time that the terms *presbyter* and *bishop* were applied to the same person, (the one as a *title of respect*, and the other as *the name of an office*) till the hierarchy was completely established under the roman pontiff. A study which had formerly been accounted very dry, and had been carried on with violent animosity, under Dr. Campbell's hands became both entertaining and interesting, yet could give no offence to any, but to those who maintained the *jus divinum* of bishops, and their hereditary succession from the apostles. But these prelections on church-history will speak for themselves. It would be indelicate in the writer of this account to give any critique on a performance, to which this paper is prefixed, and on which every reader must be left to judge for himself.



himself. He shall only remark that, in a conversation which he had with Dr. Campbell, a few weeks before his death, he heard that candid man say, that he would still make some corrections in this work, if his life were prolonged. These, however, were not of such a nature as to affect either the general merit, or the design and scope of the performance.

On the second branch of the theory, viz. scripture criticism, Dr. Campbell observed that detached views of particular articles could not be equal to the harmony, connection, and mutual dependence of the several parts of a great whole. He remarked that scripture criticism was a subject on which volumes had been written, and commentators multiplied to no good purpose; that it would be of little consequence to lead the students through the labyrinths of commentators, whose glosses tended rather to darken and perplex than to illustrate and explain, and that it would be endless, or insupportably tedious, to mention all the various readings and disputed passages of holy writ. But, he added, that, instead of a tedious and uninteresting discussion of many separate and minute particulars, he should lay down general rules or canons of scripture criticism, by which the students themselves might be critics, without depending upon any commentator. Then he laid down and illustrated those canons of scripture criticism, which have been already mentioned, as published along with the Translation of the Gospels. He had done a similar thing with regard to verbal criticism in his Philosophy of Rhetoric; for his comprehensive mind saw things in the different relations which they bore to one another, where many persons could only have viewed them separate, not discerning any connection between them.

Under

Under the third branch of the theory, viz. polemic divinity, Dr. Campbell, though a most acute metaphysician, able reasoner, and judicious critic, who was perfectly master of all the controversies, did not hold polemic divinity in very high esteem; but professed that he wished to make the students useful ministers of the gospel, rather than learned and ingenious disputants. He remarked, however, that this study was by no means to be neglected; but that the time, to which he had limited himself, would only permit him to give some directions as to the ends or objects, which the student should pursue, and the books which he should read. He prefaced these directions with remarking, that every divine should make himself master of the controversy with the deists, that he might be able to defend the christian revelation against all free-thinkers, who are the advocates only of natural religion; and that he should be thoroughly acquainted with all the different articles, which are disputed between the roman-catholics and protestants. The general directions in regard to polemic divinity may be summed up in the following sentences, which are purposely expressed in the most simple and concise language; that they may be soon read, and easily remembered. Begin with studying the scriptures in the original languages; attend carefully to the distinction, that should always be made, between classical or pure greek, and the greek of the Septuagint and Testament, where the words, taken separately, are pure greek, but where the idiom of the language, and even the acceptation of many of the words, is derived from the hebrew, the chaldaic, or the syriac. Be acquainted with the civil history, the manners and customs of ancient times and nations, especially with that of the Jews, where the reading of Josephus will often be useful. But whatever  
books

books you read occasionally, read the scriptures frequently. Mark the different passages which you do not understand; read them with patience, not being too anxious to understand every thing at the first reading over. But persevere and read the scriptures in the original, a second and a third time; and, without consulting any commentator, those difficult passages will always become fewer as your knowledge increases. Read the scriptures also with modesty, neither being too full of yourself, nor supposing that human reason can always comprehend divine mysteries: and read them always with fervent prayer to God, the source of wisdom and light, that he would assist and direct you in your researches after truth. Do not complain that you want books, when you have the scriptures themselves in the original languages. If you have a Hebrew Bible, a septuagint and a Greek New Testament, you have the most necessary, and the most useful, of all books to a christian divine. Read carefully all the versions which are given of disputed passages\*; make much

\* The following observations are of such importance, that they are given nearly in his own words:

“ Translation is both the simplest and most important species of  
“ explanation. One considerable advantage of reading versions in  
“ different languages, is this: There are many words which, because they  
“ are familiar to us, we think we understand perfectly: but it is the  
“ very circumstance of their familiarity, that prevents our discovering  
“ that we do not understand them. By being acquainted with ver-  
“ sions, the terms of which are not so familiar to us, we shall some-  
“ times be led to discover, almost instantly, the genuine sentiment of  
“ the sacred writer. *Regnum Dei, emendatio vitæ, sana doctrina*, to  
“ an attentive reader, suggest something different from what is con-  
“ veyed in our version, and give us a more precise idea than the  
“ words, *kingdom of God, repentance, and sound doctrine*, import to  
“ the English reader.

“ If

much use of versions, and compare them all carefully with the original. Read the vulgate, though a translation authorized by the Romish church, as well as the versions of individuals, such as Castalio, Beza, Junius, and Tremellius; and also Houbigant, if you have access to his translation. You cannot be hurt by reading versions, and comparing them with the original. But put no confidence in commentators. Consult them sparingly, never use them till the last, and then use them only as dictionaries. In this view, however, read commentators of all parties; and judge of them more from their freedom of thought, abilities, and erudition, than from considering to what party they belong. In comparing the different kinds of commentators with one another, remember, that paraphrasts are the worst, because they undertake too much,

“ If the young divine study on the common plan, and begin with consulting a commentator, (and if he mean to be impartial he must consult several) he is laid under a necessity of being unsettled in his opinions, from the different expositions given. For he has no fund of his own in the knowledge of the language, style, and manner, of the sacred books, whereby he may be assisted in forming a judgment between the jarring comments of different expositors; and when the young student is possessed of a natural good taste and quickness of discernment, it were a pity not to put him into that track, which might qualify him, in time, for being an expositor to himself, and not leave him in the power of the first he happens to meet with; or at least, of that commentator, who has the knack of setting off his opinions in the most plausible manner. To prescribe to the young student, as some do, to read the scriptures regularly along with some approved commentary, is, in my opinion, a more effectual method of making him the disciple of the commentator, than the disciple of Christ. The ground is in this way pre-occupied—his head is stuffed with the criticisms of others.—All that is required of him is memory—there is little room for judgment or reflection.”



or promise most ; while scholiasts are the best, because they undertake and promise least. Be on your guard against too much ingenuity in commentators : for genius, in this case, has often led them astray, where humble piety, and plain common sense, would have kept them in the right path. Beware particularly of any attachment to a pre-conceived system ; and do not think, that you will be safe, if you use what you call an approved commentator. (It is a pity, though there were less danger of being misled, that a young man of taste, learning, and genius, should be chained to the opinions, or kept in the trammels, of a commentator.) See always with your own eyes, and not through the spectacles of glossarists, commentators, or paraphrasts. Remember that your errors will be much more pardonable, when you use your own eyes, and when you come short of the truth, after making the best use of your own reason, than when ye are led implicitly by passion, or by prejudice. Let your religious system be the last thing that ye make ; or where ye have made one in early life, be still correcting it, as you acquire more knowledge—not contending for the opinions of men, but enquiring after the mind of the spirit.

He concluded this branch of his subject with declaring, that he exhorted the students to do what he had practiced himself ; and in a very happy illustration, which made a strong impression on the mind of the writer of this account, and which is subjoined in a large note, that deserves to be carefully perused \*, he compared the two methods of using

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\* “ The study of language and history does not indeed present us  
 “ With an exposition of particular passages of scripture, (it is for that  
 “ reason quite above the suspicion of partiality) but it does what is  
 “ more valuable :—It furnishes us with the first principles of know-  
 ledge,



commentators, and of studying the scriptures in the original languages, and being acquainted with ancient history, in order to show the superiority of the latter method of studying polemic divinity.

Under the *second general head*, viz. *Practice*, or the practical part of theology, Dr. Campbell delivered several excellent prelections to the students. He prefaced these in that modest manner, which so much recommended his superiour talents, and great erudition, to his hearers, by

“ledge, from which an attentive and judicious person will be able to  
 “draw proper conclusions, and form just opinions for himself. The  
 “other way, indeed, is better adapted to gratify the laziness of the  
 “sciolist, who would be learned, but cannot bear, even for the sake  
 “of learning, to be at the least expence of thought and reflection.  
 “The man who advises such an easy method, which is by far the  
 “commonest, is like one who tells you—‘This writing, the contents  
 “of which you are anxious to be acquainted with, you *need not take the*  
 “*trouble to peruse yourself.* It is but *dimly written*, and we have now  
 “only *twilight*. I have *better eyes*, and am *acquainted with the* cha-  
 “racter. Do but *attend*, and I shall *read it distinctly* in your hearing.’  
 “On the other hand, he who with me advises the other method, is  
 “like one who says—‘Take this writing into *your own hand*. I shall  
 “procure you *a supply of light*, and though the *character is rather old*,  
 “yet, with some attention, and comparing one part with another,  
 “you will soon be familiarised to it, and may then read it for yourself.’  
 “In a matter of little moment, and where there can be no danger of  
 “deception, it may be said, the *first* method is the best, because the  
 “easiest and quickest. But suppose it is an affair of great importance  
 “to you, and that there is real danger of deception. Suppose farther,  
 “that your anxiety having led you to employ different readers, the  
 “consequence has been, that each reader, to your great astonishment,  
 “discovers things in the writing which were not discovered by the  
 “rest; nay more, that the discoveries of the different readers are con-  
 “tradictory to one another—would you not then be satisfied, that the  
 “only part a reasonable man could take, would be, to recur to the  
 “second method.”

saying, that in explaining the branches of this practice to the students, he claimed no superiority over them, excepting the attention which is paid to an aged and experienced mariner, when directing or piloting younger sailors through seas of difficult navigation, and that the lessons, which he was to give them, would serve as monitors, and suggest to them what might be useful.

Upon the first branch of this head, *viz.* Pulpit Eloquence, he removed a preliminary objection to this as an art, which ought to be studied and acquired. He also showed, that pulpit eloquence should include, in general, what was common to all sorts of orations; and therefore, that the christian orator must attend to the character of the speaker, the character of his hearers, to the subject of discourse, and to its particular occasion and intention. When entering upon the particular discussion of pulpit eloquence, Dr. Campbell considered the faculty of the mind to be addressed, and the effect to be produced by the speaker. Those faculties, he mentioned, were Reason, Imagination, the Passions, and Will. The discourses which addressed the Reason, were either explanatory or probatory; and the effects to be produced by them, were either information or conviction. The discourses which were addressed to the Imagination, included characteristical sermons, and also, panegyrical or funeral orations, much used in some countries, which produce veneration for the memory of others, a desire to imitate their good qualities, and various other pleasures of imagination, which are not only consistent with true religion, but also tend to promote the interests of piety. Those discourses which address the Passions, he remarked, were called pathetic discourses; and produced that tender sensibility, and those other passions, and affections of the mind, which are favourable both to religion,

gion, and to virtue. And those discourses which are addressed to the Will, he defined to be those whose object is directly to influence human conduct, by inducing a man to abandon certain vices, and to cultivate certain virtues \*.

On the subject of pulpit eloquence he also considered the choice of texts; the exordium, or introduction of a discourse; narration; the division of a discourse; the prosecution of a subject; and the peroration or conclusion. He considered sentiment as the soul, and language as the body, of a discourse. At the same time he noticed the old division of a sermon, and particularly distinguished between the provinces of invention, division, and elocution. But, above all, he insisted on paying the strictest regard to unity of design, in opposition to the old textual

\* It is proper here to observe, that Dr. Campbell informed the students, when delivering his prelections on pulpit eloquence, that many of the directions which he gave them, in regard to this subject, were the result of different conferences in the theological club of Aberdeen; the substance of which Dr. Campbell was desired to commit to writing, and a copy of which, as already mentioned, he sent to Edinburgh to Dr. Glennie. As Dr. Gerard, who had access to the papers of that club, of which he was afterwards a member, has followed the arrangement and adopted many of the same sentiments, it was necessary to state this fact; that it may not be supposed, that either of those gentlemen had borrowed from the other. The distribution of the ancients, namely, Cicero and Quintilian, was adopted, as far as regards eloquence in general; and the theological club, of which Dr. Campbell was both an original and a very respectable member, was the common source of information both to him and Dr. Gerard, as far as respected pulpit eloquence in particular. Here both these young men laid the foundation of their knowledge in theology; as they afterwards, in the Aberdeen literary society, cultivated other branches of science.

method of preaching\*, and also in opposition to the practice of those preachers, who drag in the whole system into

\* As unity of design is a matter of so great importance, the following judicious observations, and particular investigation and illustration, are quoted at length in his own words. "It must be remembered, that it is the leading sentiment conveyed in the text, which it is the preacher's business to illustrate, and not the terms or phrases by which it is expressed. It is this difference that makes a principal distinction between every kind of sermon whatever, and that species of lecture called exposition, wherein the text is itself properly the subject, and not to be considered as a bare expression of the subject. According to this false taste in preaching, the speaker is not employed in the discussion of any subject; but is, as it were, amusing himself and his hearers, with a number of little independent dissertations on the different words, idioms, and references, which are found in a line or two of sacred writ. It will, perhaps, be urged, that there are few passages, which, from the turn of the expression, would lead the speaker into such devious tracts, as these above alluded to. But, in reality, where the same notion prevails in regard to pulpit composition, there can hardly be found a text so simple, as will not afford some occasion for the same manner of treating the subject. Let us suppose that the preacher's subject is to explain this doctrine of revelation, that the grace of God is the genuine source of man's salvation. And let us suppose he chooses for his text Ephes. ii. 8. *By grace ye are saved.* One more simple, or more apposite, is not even to be conceived. Yet the most general and approved way in which, in many places, this theme at present would be managed is the following. First, would the speaker say, '*I shall explain what is meant by grace.*' Secondly, *what is meant by salvation*, or what it is to be saved. Thirdly and lastly, *the relation which one of these bears to the other*, or the dependance of the latter upon the former.' Methinks I hear it resound from every quarter, 'Could there be a juster method, or one that more perfectly exhausts the text?' No, indeed, if we are barely to regard the words; in which case



into every discourse, and therefore who, with a multitude of texts, have, in fact, but one sermon. In order to promote

“ it may be said to be three texts more properly than one. My intended subject was only one ; but here we have no less than three.  
 “ Aye, but,’ say you, ‘ are not those three so intimately connected, that the one cannot be perfectly understood without the other?’  
 “ That they are indeed connected is very certain ; but so also are all the doctrines and precepts of our religion. Is it, therefore, impossible to explain one without explaining them all? If so, every sermon ought to be a system both of the tenets and duties of christianity ; and as the christian system is only one, in this way there should be no more but one sermon. And, as strange as it may appear, I have known preachers, and very popular preachers too, whom I have heard frequently, and yet can say, with truth, I never heard from them but *one sermon*. The *form*, the *mould* into which it was cast, was *different* according to the different texts ; but the *matter* was altogether the same. You had invariably the preacher’s *whole system*, *original sin*, the *incarnation*, the *satisfaction*, *election*, *imputed righteousness*, *justification by faith*, *sanctification by the spirit*, and so forth. As to the practical part, including the duties which our religion requires, whether it was that it appeared more obvious, or of less consequence, I cannot say ; but it was very rarely and very slightly touched. I shall only say in general of this method, when introduced into the pulpit, that however acceptable it may be to the many, with whom sound always goes much farther than sense, and favourite words and phrases, to which their ears have been accustomed, than the most judicious sentiments, I know not a surer method of rendering preaching utterly inefficacious and uninstrucive. To attempt every thing is the direct way to effect nothing. If you would go over every part, you must be superficial in every part ; you can examine no part to any useful purpose. What would you think of a professor of anatomy, who should go over all the organs, limbs, and parts of the human body, external and internal, in every lecture, and think himself sufficiently excused by saying that there is a connection in all the parts, and that the

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“ treating

mote this unity of design, which, with him, was always a principal object, when he *prescribed homilies, or po-*

*pular*

“ treating of one naturally led him to say something of another, and  
 “ so on till he got through the whole? From such a teacher could a  
 “ man expect to learn any thing but words? The head of the learner  
 “ would very quickly be filled with technical terms and phrases, to  
 “ which he could affix no definite signification. He might soon be  
 “ rendered an accomplished pedant in this art; but to the end of the  
 “ world would not, in this way, be rendered a proficient. And do  
 “ we not see many such pedants in divinity, who think themselves  
 “ wonderful scholars, because they have got the knack of uttering,  
 “ with great volubility, all the favourite phrases, and often un-  
 “ meaning cant of a particular sect or faction? It is indeed to be im-  
 “ puted to that jealousy which party spirit, and our unhappy divisions  
 “ in religious matters have produced, that this futile manner of  
 “ preaching owes its origin. In consequence of this party spirit  
 “ many hearers, whose minds are unhappily poisoned with its malig-  
 “ nity, come to a new preacher with anxious concern, not to be in-  
 “ structed, but to be satisfied whether he is what they call orthodox;  
 “ is a true partisan, and has the shibboleth of the party in him. And  
 “ the preacher, on the other hand, either because he hath imbibed  
 “ the same sectarian spirit, or because he is more ambitious to please  
 “ than to edify, takes this way, which is by far the shortest and the  
 “ easiest, of ingratiating himself in their favour. But to return to  
 “ the particular instance, which gave rise to these observations. All  
 “ that in regard to the two points, *grace* and *salvation*, is previously  
 “ necessary, to the explanation of the only point which makes the  
 “ subject, is to observe, in so many words, *that grace means here the*  
 “ *unmerited favour of God, and salvation, deliverance from all that evil*  
 “ *which is consequent on sin.* And this may be sufficiently effected in  
 “ the *exposition* of the text, or, in a *paraphrase* upon it. Nay, what-  
 “ ever farther is of importance as to both these points, *grace* and *sal-*  
 “ *vation*, will necessarily and more naturally occur, without doing  
 “ any violence to the unity and simplicity of the discourse, in the  
 “ illustration of the subject, which is purely to show in what respect  
 “ divine

ular sermons, to the students, *he left them to choose their own texts, and specified only the subjects of discourse.* And in order to expose both textual, and systematic discourses, he gave examples of such a method of dividing and handling two discourses, together with a very happy illustration, which are marked in notes below\*.

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“divine grace is the genuine source of man’s salvation. But would you have only one point? Where is then the distribution, or partition of the subject of which you spoke before? I would, indeed, have but one subject, though, where the nature of the thing will admit it, distributed for order and for memory’s sake into its different members, and then the several points in the division must appear as the constituent parts of one subject, one whole, and not as so many distinct, though related, subjects or wholes. Thus the forementioned subject may be illustrated under these two articles which will make the heads of discourse. 1st. The *plan of our redemption* by the *mediation of the Son* is the *result of grace* or unmerited favour. 2dly, The *completion* of it in us by the *operation of the spirit* also the *result of grace*. Both these manifestly centre in the same point, *salvation springs from grace*. But if you must draw in every thing that is related, you can never have done, till you have made your sermon a complete system of christian divinity.”

\* After showing that the old method was, according to the logic of the schools, to divide a discourse into three heads, called *the subject, the predicate, and the copula*, he gave an example of a plain text in these words, *God is faithful*. The division here in the old way is, 1st. To consider God, who is the subject; next the faithfulness predicated of God; and thirdly, the copula, or the connection between these two. In order to expose the absurdity of this division of a sermon, he proceeds in the following humorous illustration. “I shall suppose that one had prescribed to him, as the subject of an oration, *an inquiry into the antiquity of rhyme*. Accordingly he goes to work and having well weighed every word and syllable of the question, he thus lays down the plan of his operations. 1st. says he, ‘I shall consider what is implied in the word antiquity in all  
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On some of the most important articles of this branch, viz. pulpit eloquence, he delivered particular prelections on monotony; singsong; rapidity of speech; excessive slowness in speaking; indistinctness of utterance; using violent action; beginning in too low a key, or speaking excessively loud; on attempting to exhaust a subject, which often renders a discourse tedious, instead of making the hearers rise with an appetite, or desirous of more instruction; and lastly, on avoiding technical phrases, or controverted terms, and in using scripture language, in all matters of doctrine especially, in which respect his own example was a constant lesson to the students.

On the *second branch* of the practice of theology, he considered propriety of character in private life, or teaching by example. Here he insisted on the particular temptations to which a clergyman is exposed, and warned them against entertaining anger or revenge; against excessive desire of popularity, which might lead them to do very improper things, in order to obtain the applause of the

“ the different acceptations of which the term is susceptible. 2dly, I  
 “ shall consider the nature, import, and properties of what is called  
 “ rhyme. 3dly, The relation in which the one stands to the other,  
 “ or how far, and in what respects, the one may be justly predicated  
 “ of the other.’ Could any one imagine, that such a disquisitor un-  
 “ derstood the subject?”

He also gave an entertaining example of preaching a whole system, in an outline of a discourse on purity of heart, in words to this purpose. “ Such a systematic preacher, in order to make you understand  
 “ purity, must surely begin with explaining the *sanctifying operation*  
 “ *of the spirit*, and that you may better know the *necessity* of this,  
 “ gives you an account of man’s *previous corruption*. ‘This induces him  
 “ to explain *original sin*.’ From this topic he would, of course, be  
 “ led to consider *original righteousness*. But he could not do this  
 “ without a dissertation on the *image of God*.”

multitude



multitude; and against servility of character, which prevents a man from doing his duty, for fear of offending men by any difference of opinion, or opposition in conduct. He also inculcated meekness, or gentleness of manners; temperance; as including not only sobriety of behaviour, but also a general command of all the passions; gravity of deportment as opposed to levity; and dignity of character, which tends in general to procure respect for a clergyman, and which always prevents him from being despised.

On the last branch of the practice of theology, viz. propriety of character in public conduct, Dr. Campbell was not able, from increasing infirmities, and from the time taken up in preparing his other works for the press, to finish his whole course of prelections. Yet he delivered several useful lectures on christian duty and christian practice; and on the duties which we owe to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. It does not appear, that he ever wrote any thing on the conduct of ministers, when attending the church courts of the scotch establishment. But it is the less to be regretted, that Dr. Campbell did not finish the last part of his plan, as Dr. Gerard had written and delivered, in the divinity halls both of Marischal and King's Colleges, his excellent Lectures on the pastoral Care, which have been lately published by his son and successor.

It would be improper, and even a culpable neglect in the writer of this account, not to mention in this place, that during the first twenty-one years that Dr. Campbell was professor of divinity in Marischal College, Dr. Gerard filled the same chair in King's College, with very distinguished abilities. The coincidence of two such great men teaching the same branches of literature at the same time,  
and

and to the same students, was very remarkable. It is not saying too much to assert that, during this period, there was not an university in Europe, which had two more able professors of divinity teaching at the same time within its precincts.

In regard to Dr. Campbell, who is the subject of this account, it ought to be remarked, that it was not merely his great learning, but also his happy art in communicating knowledge, which rendered his course of lectures so attractive to the students. His fine imagination irradiated his deep and extensive erudition; and almost fascinated the students who attended his prelections. For though, from the above general outline which we have given of them, it may be supposed that they were merely didactic discourses, they abounded with so much wit and genuine humour, that the students were as much entertained as they were instructed by his lectures. That wit, however, was by him always made subservient to his argument; and that humour was only the hand-maid of his erudition. Though some of his prelections were necessarily more abstract, more learned; and of course less entertaining than others, yet there were few of them, comparatively speaking, in which there was not a stroke of wit, or a piece of delicate humour, very happily expressed: and after some very close reasoning, or judicious and accurate criticism, he would often surprize his hearers by an apt allusion, a spirited metaphor, and sometimes by a very apposite and amusing illustration. It was not then to be wondered, that his prelections were so much resorted to, and so much admired by the students.

This imperfect sketch may give some idea of Dr. Campbell's plan of lecturing; but independently of the merit of his prelections, his interesting figure and engaging man-

ner rendered them most attractive to the students. If the reader is at all pleased with the *parts*, which are inserted in this very general view, the writer of this account would ask, in the words of Eschines, what would you have said if you had heard himself deliver the *whole*.

To this general view of his prelections in divinity it would be proper to subjoin a short account of his behaviour to the students, in order that his whole conduct, as a professor of divinity, may be before the reader at the same time. When any of them delivered discourses, he asked the opinion of all who were present; and when any young man, who was then invited to speak, had expressed his sentiments, both with propriety and with delicacy, he always took notice of what was thus advanced, whether on good or bad grounds, with particular marks of respect for the person who had made the observation. But when he saw a young man petulant and forward, he never failed to check him in such a manner, as to induce him to make his observations on the discourses of his companions with greater modesty on any future occasion. When he spoke of the discourse himself, he was equally admired for the gentleness of his expressions and the justness of his criticisms. But when he saw them wander very far from the subject prescribed to them, he, by some apt allusion, made them ashamed of their conduct. He insisted very much on the regular attendance of the students; and when any of them came only for a few days to deliver a discourse in the hall, he would tell them that their attendance was only to give, not to receive, instruction; and that it would be just as beneficial to them, if they had *sent their discourse by post*, and gotten somebody to read it in the hall. But his prelections were so much esteemed by the students, that they attended them as frequently

quently as possible. Those who had country schools could only afford to attend them a very short time; as their salaries are much less than the wages of a common labourer. (It is hoped some relief will be given to this useful body of men.) The importance of Dr. Campbell's prelections will excuse the length of this paper.

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*Mr. HUME's Letter to Dr. CAMPBELL, referred to in page xvii of the preceding Memoirs.*

“ SIR,

“ It has so seldom happened, that controversies in philosophy, much more in theology, have been carried on without producing a personal quarrel between the parties; that I must regard my present situation as somewhat extraordinary, who have reason to give you thanks for the civil and obliging manner, in which you have conducted the dispute against me, on so interesting a subject as that of miracles. Any little symptoms of vehemence, of which I formerly used the freedom to complain, when you favoured me with a sight of the manuscript, are either removed, or explained away, or atoned for by civilities, which are far beyond what I have any title to pretend to. It will be natural for you to imagine, that I will fall upon some shift to evade the force of your arguments, and to retain my former opinion in the point controverted between us: but it is impossible for me not to see the ingenuity of your performance, and the great learning which you have displayed

“ against



“ against me. I consider myself as very much honoured  
 “ in being thought worthy of an answer by a person of  
 “ so much merit; and, as I find that the public does you  
 “ justice, with regard to the ingenuity and good compo-  
 “ sition of your piece, I hope you will have no reason to  
 “ repent engaging with an antagonist, whom perhaps, in  
 “ strictness, you might have ventured to neglect. I own  
 “ to you, that I never felt so violent an inclination to de-  
 “ fend myself as at present, when I am thus fairly chal-  
 “ lenged by you; and I think I could find something  
 “ specious, at least, to urge in my own defence: but as  
 “ I had fixed a resolution, in the beginning of my life,  
 “ always to leave the public to judge between my adver-  
 “ saries and me, without making any reply, I must ad-  
 “ here inviolably to this resolution, otherwise my silence,  
 “ on any future occasion, would be construed to be an  
 “ inability to answer, and would be matter of triumph  
 “ against me \*.

“ It may perhaps amuse you to learn the first hint,  
 “ which suggested to me that argument, which you have  
 “ so strenuously attacked. I was walking in the cloys-

\* As far as I recollect, Mr. Hume, whose curious theories have raised many able opponents, has, except in one instance, uniformly adhered to this resolution. But what no attack on his principles, either religious or philosophical, could effectuate, has been produced by a difference on an historical question, a point which has indeed been long and much controverted; but, as to which, we may say with truth, that it would not be easy to conceive how the interests of individuals, or of society, could, at present, be affected by the decision, on which ever side it were given. I believe Mr. Hume's best friends wish, for his own sake, as I do sincerely, (for I respect his talents) that he had given no handle for this exception. Preface to Campbell on Miracles, &c. Third Edit. 1797.

“ ters of the Jesuits College of la Fleche, (a town in  
“ which I passed two years of my youth), and was en-  
“ gaged in conversation with a Jesuit of some parts and  
“ learning, who was relating to me, and urging some  
“ nonsensical miracle performed lately in their convent ;  
“ when I was tempted to dispute against him ; and as my  
“ head was full of the topics of my Treatise of Human  
“ Nature, which I was at that time composing, this argu-  
“ ment immediately occurred to me, and I thought it very  
“ much gravelled my companion. But at last he observed  
“ to me, that it was impossible for that argument to have  
“ any solidity ; because it operated equally against the  
“ gospel as the catholic miracles ; which observation I  
“ thought proper to admit as a sufficient answer. I  
“ believe you will allow, that the freedom at least of this  
“ reasoning makes it somewhat extraordinary to have  
“ been the produce of a convent of Jesuits ; though per-  
“ haps you may think, that the sophistry of it savours  
“ plainly of the place of its birth : I beg my compliments  
“ to Mrs. Campbell, and am, with great regard,

“ SIR,

“ Your most obedient humble servant,

“ DAVID HUME.”

“ *Edin. June 7, 1762.*”

# LECTURES

ON

## ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY:

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### LECTURE I.

#### THE SACRED HISTORY.

I INTEND that the subject of the present, and some succeeding Lectures, shall be the Sacred History, the first branch of the theoretic part of the theological course which claims the attention of the student. This is subdivided into two parts: the first comprehends the events which preceded the Christian æra, the second those which followed. The first, in a looser way of speaking, is included under the title of Jewish History, the second is what is commonly denominated Church History, or Ecclesiastic History. I say in a looser way of speaking the first is included under the title of the Jewish History:

for, in strictness of speech, it compriseth several most important events; which happened long before the existence of the nation of the Jews. Such are the creation of the world, the fall of man, the universal deluge, the dispersion of the human race, the call of Abraham, and those promises which gave to man the early hope of restoration. But as all the credible information we have on these topics is from the Jews, and intimately connected with their history, and as little or no light can be derived from the Pagan histories, or rather fables, that have a relation to ages so remote, it hath not been judged necessary to have a regard to these in the general division. It seemed more natural and commodious to allow all that part of sacred history which preceded the commencement of the christian church, to come under the common name of Jewish.

Need any arguments be used in order to evince, that every theological student should make this, at least, as far as the biblical records bring us, a particular object of his application? In every view we can take of the subject, it is suitable, in some it is even necessary. Let it be observed, that all the articles of our faith may be divided into three classes. Some may not improperly be denominated philosophical, some historical, and some prophetical. Of the first kind, the philosophical, are those which concern the divine nature and  
perfect-



perfections, those also which concern human nature, its capacities and duties; of the second kind, the historical, are those which relate to the creation, the fall, the deluge, the Mosaic dispensation, the promises, the incarnation of the Messiah, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, the descent of the Holy Spirit, the mission of the apostles, and the several purposes which, by these means, it pleased the divine Providence to effectuate; of the third, or the prophetic kind, are those which regard events yet future, such as the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the human race, the general judgement, eternity, heaven and hell. As therefore a considerable portion of the christian faith consists in points of an historic nature, it must be of consequence for elucidating these, to be acquainted with those collateral events, if I may so express myself, which happen to be connected with any of them by the circumstances of time and place.

But this knowledge is of importance to us not only for the illustration of the christian doctrine, but for its confirmation also. When the religion of Christ was first promulgated throughout the world, as the difficulties it had to encounter would have been absolutely insurmountable, had no other than ordinary and human means been employed in its favour, it pleased God, by an

extraordinary interposition of providence, in the gift of miraculous powers, to ensure success to this great design, in defiance of all the powers of the earth combined against it. But no sooner was the strength of the opposition broken, inso-much that the friends and the enemies of Christ came, if I may so express myself, to stand on even ground, than it pleased heaven to withdraw those supernatural aids, and leave this cause to force its way in the world, by its own intrinsic and external evidence. I would not by this be understood to insinuate, that the christian cause hath not always been under the protection of a special and over-ruling providence. I would not be understood to signify, that any external means whatever could have given to our religion its full effect on the hearts and consciences of men, without the internal influences of the divine spirit. I only mean to observe to you, what was certainly the fact, that, when matters came to be thus balanced between faith and unbelief, outward miracles and prodigies were not judged by the supreme disposer of all events, to be any longer necessary for silencing gainsayers, and for reaching conviction to the understanding.

That the power of working miracles did at first accompany the publication of the gospel by the apostles, we have at this day the strongest evidence, as from other sources, so especially from

from the success of their preaching, which, without this help, would be utterly unaccountable, and in direct contradiction to all the laws of probability hitherto known in the world. For not to mention the inveterate prejudices arising from immemorial opinions and practices, as well as from mistaken interest, which the first preachers of christianity had to encounter, not to mention the universal contempt and detestation wherein the nation to which they belonged was holden, both by the Greeks and by the Romans, not to mention the apparent ridicule and absurdity there was in exhibiting to the world, as a saviour and mediator with God, a Jew, who had been ignominiously crucified as a malefactor by a Roman procurator, how inconceivably unequal must have been the combat, when on the one side were power, rank, opulence, birth, learning, and art; and on the other side, weakness, dependance, poverty, obscurity, and illiterate simplicity. The success of the last in a warfare so disproportionately matched, is an irrefragable demonstration, that the work was not of man, but of God. But as the conviction we have of the reality of those events, and of the means by which they were effected, is derived to us through the channel of testimony, it behoves us to be as careful as possible, in order that the evidence may have its full effect upon us, that we be right informed, both

as to the nature of the testimony itself, and as to the character and capacity of the witnesses. This is one consideration, which immediately affects the evidence of the christian revelation.

Again, as the last mentioned dispensation is erected on the mosaical, the divine origin of which it every where pre-supposeth; whatever affects the credibility of the latter, will unquestionably affect the credibility of the former; whatever tends to subvert the basis, tends of necessity to overturn the superstructure; and, on the contrary, when once the connection between the two establishments, the mosaic and the christian, is thoroughly understood, whatever tends to confirm the one, tends also, though more indirectly, to confirm the other. This reflection naturally leads us to carry our researches farther back, and endeavour, as much as possible, to get acquainted with all those circumstances and events which can throw any light upon the scripture history.

But it may be objected, that if all this were necessary to confirm our faith in the gospel, what would be the case of the bulk of mankind, who, by reason of the time they must employ in earning a subsistence, have no leisure for such inquiries; and, by reason of the education they have received, are not in a capacity of making them? To this objection a two-fold answer may be returned: first, such inquiries are not necessary



sary to the man, who, through want of education and of time, is incapacitated for prosecuting them. Those very wants, which unfit him for the study, are his great security that he shall have no occasion for it. The man of letters, on the contrary, whose time is much at his own disposal, is daily exposed, especially in this age and country, both from reading and from conversation, to meet with objections against revealed religion, which the other has no probability of ever hearing; and which, if he should by any accident come to hear, it is a thousand to one he does not understand. As our resources, therefore, ought to be in proportion to our needs, and as our means and methods of defence ought to be adapted to the particular ways wherein we are liable to be attacked, there is a peculiar reason which men of letters have for entering so far at least into these inquiries, as to be acquainted with both sides of the question, and to be equitable judges between the friends and the enemies of the Gospel. There is also another reason, which ought to determine those in particular who have the holy ministry in view. It is their business, and therefore in a special manner their duty, to be furnished, as much as possible, for removing not only their own doubts, but the doubts of other people. It is their province to support the weak, to confirm the doubting, and to reclaim

the strayed. In spiritual matters, especially, they ought to serve as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame.

But further, the knowledge of the sacred history is not only of importance for illustrating the truths of our religion, and for strengthening the evidences of its divinity, but also in the way of ornament and recommendation to the ministerial character. Nor let it be imagined that this is a matter of little moment. It will not require an uncommon share of penetration to discover, that this, on the contrary, is a matter of the greatest consequence. Whatever tends to adorn the character of a pastor, and render him respectable, is sure of procuring him in general a more favourable reception with mankind. When he speaks, he commands a closer attention, which gives double weight to every thing he says. It is this respect to superiority in knowledge and discernment, which makes, as Job poetically expresseth it, even princes refrain talking, and the nobles lay their hand upon their mouth. The utility of every such qualification, as serves to attract this veneration, will be readily acknowledged by all who are duly sensible how great a point in instructing is carried, when the people to be instructed are induced seriously to attend, to think, to feel.

Thus

Thus much shall suffice for what regards the propriety of the study, and the several purposes of illustrating, confirming, and recommending our religion, which it is fitted to serve. Let us next inquire into the manner in which we may hope successfully to prosecute it. And here I beg leave to take notice by the way, that it is not my intention, either on this, or any other branch of the theological science, or on what more immediately regards the pastoral care, to recommend to your perusal a multitude of books. Nothing could be easier, for one who has the honour to give lessons in theology, than to present the students with a long catalogue of authors, who have, with some reputation, treated the various topics to be studied. Ye might get in one half hour the titles of more volumes, than a whole life-time would suffice you to read over. There are several reasons which induce me to be rather sparing on this article. In the first place there is, in the practice of accumulating the names of books and authors, adding volume to volume, and folio to folio, something very forbidding, which tends greatly to dishearten the young learner. The labour appears immense, and the difficulties insuperable. The toils he hath to undergo, and the obstacles he hath to surmount, are all set full in his view; and that before he is made so sensible of the charms of  
the

the pursuit, as to be heartily engaged in it, and animated to persist in defiance of every thing that might discourage or oppose him. The conduct of nature, in this respect, is more worthy of imitation. She commonly renders the first difficulty a screen, by which the second is concealed from sight; the second answers the same purpose to the third, and so forwards. In travelling over a ridge of mountains, like the Alps or Pyrenees, every summit the traveller approaches he imagines to be the highest; and it is not till he has reached it, that he is sensible he must climb still higher. And this is what will happen to him for several successive times. Now there is this advantage in this gradual opening of the scene, that the time he has already spent, and the difficulties he hath already overcome, prove the most cogent arguments with him, not to lose his past time and labour by giving over the pursuit. The farther he advances, these arguments have the greater weight. And thus, by the help of a growing zeal and perseverance, a man will, with honour and advantage, come off victorious in an enterprize, which, had he seen from the beginning all its difficulty, he had never undertaken.

A second reason for using this method is, the great variety of studies in which the divine, as ye have seen, must necessarily be conversant.

None



None of them can, without hurt both to his reputation and usefulness, be entirely neglected. Now the greater diversity there is of subjects in this study, the more the inquiry into each ought to be simplified, that the young student may neither be perplexed, and, as it were, lose himself in a cumbersome multiplicity; nor so attach himself to one part of the study, as to swallow up all the time that should be employed on the other parts. He ought to be introduced into every province of this extensive country: the most patent roads should be pointed out to him: a perfect acquaintance with each must be the work of time, and the fruit of his own assiduity and labour. Or dropping the metaphor: of every separate article of this study, he ought, in the schools of divinity, to acquire some general notions; but to attain a thorough proficiency in them all, is rather the business of a life-time, than the effect of a few years application. It is indeed in this, as in every other art or science, the foundation only is laid at school, the manner of building is indicated; the scholar may afterwards rear the superstructure as high as his disposition and opportunities shall enable him. Now it is my design here, rather to lay a wide foundation, on which a goodly edifice may in time be erected; though I should make but little or no progress in raising the walls, than on a  
narrow

narrow bottom, to advance farther in the building; because, in this case, the fabric, though it be raised ever so high, must, by reason of the straitened limits to which its foundation does necessarily confine it, be both mean and incommodious.

I shall assign a third reason for not harrassing my hearers, by recommending a great variety of books. Young people are but too apt to imagine, that learning and reading are synonymous terms, and that a man is always the more learned the more he has read. Nothing can be a more egregious mistake. Food is necessary for the support of the body, and without a competency of it, we could not enjoy either vigour or health; but we should not suspect him to be overstocked with wisdom, who should conclude from this concession, that the more a man eats, the more healthy and vigorous he must be. We know from experience, that when a certain proportion is exceeded, those corporeal endowments, health and strength, are impaired by the very means, which, if used in moderation, would have increased them. The same thing exactly holds with reading, which is the food of the mind. The memory may be loaded and encumbered in the one case, as the stomach is in the other. And in either case, if we take more than we can digest, it can never turn to good account. There  
have

have been instances of such *helluones librorum*; such book-gluttons, as very much resembled the lean kine in Pharaoh's vision, which, when they had devoured the fat and well-favoured kine, were themselves as lean and ill-favoured as before. It is indeed necessary that we accustom ourselves to read: but it is likewise necessary, and much more difficult, that we accustom ourselves to reflect. There ought to be stated times for both exercises; but to the last, particularly, our best endeavours ought frequently to be directed. And for this purpose, I know no better helps, than to be obliged, sometimes by conversation, sometimes by composing, to express our sentiments on the subjects of which we read. The use, which the student makes of the food of the mind, bears the closest analogy to the use which the ruminating animals make of their pasture. They recall it and enjoy it a second time to much greater advantage than the first. Resemble them in this particular,—on whatever ye find instructive often ruminate.

The fourth and last reason I shall mention is, when a number of books on every topic are recommended, the student finds it, I say not difficult, but impossible, to get them all, or even the greater part of them. Fruitless endeavours, often repeated, will in time extinguish the greatest ardour; and from finding part of our task impracticable,

practicable, we are but too apt to grow careless about the whole. A few directions exactly followed are more conducive to our improvement, than a much greater number little minded.

But to return from this, which will possibly be looked on as a digression; the first thing I would earnestly recommend, in order to your acquiring the knowledge of the Old Testament history, is the frequent and attentive perusal of the Old Testament itself. Let not this recommendation, far the most important I can give, be the more lightly esteemed by any of you, because it is a book so common, a book which all men, learned and unlearned, have access to. Are not the greatest blessings always the commonest? Such is the sun, that glorious luminary which enlightens us, the earth which we inhabit, and the air which we breathe. Or are these invaluable benefits the less regarded by the pious and judicious, because of their commonness? Indeed it may be thought, that ever so great proficiency in the knowledge of a book which is in every body's hands, can never procure a man the envied character of erudition. True; but, on the other hand, will not that very circumstance of its universality justly fix the brand of ignorance on him, in whom there appears, in this respect, a remarkable deficiency? Besides, to be ignorant in one's own profession, is always accounted



counted a matter of the greatest reproach: the divine is, by profession, an interpreter of Scripture; therefore, to be deficient here, is the most unpardonable kind of ignorance. I am the more particular on this point, because, by a very common tendency in our nature, what we think we have it in our power to do at any time, we are apt, by perpetually procrastinating, to leave undone at last.

But, it may be asked, in what manner shall we read this book most profitably for the attaining of a thorough acquaintance with the history it contains? For this purpose, I would humbly suggest to you some such method as the following: it will require but a superficial notion of the whole to be able to distinguish the most remarkable epochs in sacred history; let these be marked for heads of study at different times. It is not a matter of great consequence, whether, in the division ye make, ye consider most the celebrity of the era at which the period terminates, or what will nearly produce an equal division of the subject. Let the first epoch, for example, be from the creation till the call of Abraham; the second, from that period till Jacob's journey into Egypt; the third, till the deliverance from Egypt, by the passing through the Red Sea, and the extinction of Pharaoh's host; the fourth, till the death of Moses; the  
fifth

fifth, till the death of Joshua; the sixth, till the commencement of the israelitish monarchy; the seventh, till the defection of the ten tribes from Rehoboam; the eighth, till the captivity; and the ninth, till the restoration of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. Let the student, first, attentively read over so much of the sacred volume as contains the account of one period; let him then lay by the book, and write in his own style and manner, an abstract, or abridgment, of the narrative he has read, carefully noting all the memorable events, and interspersing such remarks of his own, as he shall judge to arise naturally out of the subject. After finishing one epoch, let him proceed in the same manner to the succeeding epoch. By this method, he will fix in his mind the sacred history more effectually, than it could be done by twenty readings:

Besides, there are several other very considerable advantages which will redound from this plan regularly prosecuted. First, the student will acquire a habit of reading with greater attention, having close in his view the use he must make of what he reads, immediately after reading; secondly, he will find this practice an excellent exercise of memory; and one of the best methods of strengthening it; thirdly, it will produce in him a habit of reflection; fourthly, as it will render composition habitual to him, there

there is not an expedient that I know of, which will contribute more to give him a readiness of writing his sentiments on any subject with a natural facility, and perspicuity of expression.

Permit me to add a few more directions for assisting you in the prosecution of the plan proposed. In periods, of which an account is given by more than one of the inspired historians, it will be proper to read both accounts, and compare them together; those, for example, given in the books of Kings, and in the books of Chronicles, before ye begin to compose the intended abstract. It will not be improper to join, in like manner, the reading of the prophets, with those parts of the history which relate to the times wherein they lived. The historians, and the prophets, will often be found to reflect light upon each other. As to other helps, the chief I would recommend to you is Josephus, the jewish historian; and the best way of studying him, as I imagine, is carefully to read his relation of every particular epoch, immediately after perusing the account of it given by the inspired penmen of the Old Testament, as far as their history extends. Both may be read previously to the attempt of forming a narrative of the different periods as mentioned above. In this there will be a twofold advantage; first, by the double representation of the facts, there is a probability

they will be more deeply rooted in the memory ; secondly, by the diversity of manner in which the same things are told, a fuller view is given of the subject, and the reader's own manner is better secured against too close an imitation of either.

Before I conclude this lecture, allow me to subjoin a few remarks in regard to the character of that historian, and the credit that is due to him. That he was a man, who, to a considerable degree of eminence in the jewish erudition of those days, added a tolerable share of greek and roman literature, is a character which, in my opinion, cannot justly be refused him. As a compiler of history, it must be admitted, that in every instance in which his account, on a fair examination, is found to contradict the account given in holy writ, he is entitled to no faith at all. In cases wherein he may be said not to contradict scripture, but to differ considerably from it, by the detail of additional circumstances, it will be proper to distinguish between the earlier ages of his history and the later ages. With regard to the first, we are sure that he had no other authentic records to draw his information from, than those we have at this day in our hands. These are Moses, and those prophets, who came nearest to the time of that lawgiver. With regard to the last, though within the era of the Old Testament history, we are not so certain,



tain, that he might not have had the assistance of credible annals extant in his time, though now lost. There are two things, however, in his character, that affect his manner of writing, and require a particular attention: one is, too close an affectation of the manner of the greek historians. This appears, as in the general tenor of his style, so especially in the endeavours he uses to embellish his narration with long speeches, which he puts in the mouths of the persons introduced, a silly device for displaying the talents and eloquence of the writers rather than of the historical characters. I cannot help taking notice of one instance, in which, through an ill-judged attempt to improve and adorn, he hath spoiled, one of the finest speeches in all the history. The speech I mean, is that of Judah to his brother Joseph, then governor of Egypt, offering to ransom his brother Benjamin, by the sacrifice of his own liberty. It is impossible for any one, whose taste can relish genuine simple nature, not to be deeply affected with that speech as it is in the Pentateuch.\* On reading it, we are perfectly prepared for the effect which it produced on his unknown brother. We see, we feel, that it was impossible for humanity, for natural affection, to hold out longer. In Josephus, it is a very different kind of performance: something so cold, so far-fetched, so artificial; both

in sentiments and in language, that it savours more of one who had been educated in the schools of the Greek sophists, than of those plain, artless, patriarchal shepherds.

The other thing that deserves our notice in this author, is the excessive fear he had of exposing himself to the ridicule of his Greek and Roman readers, whose favour he very assiduously courts. This hath made him express himself on some points with such apparent scepticism, as hath induced many to think, that he was not a firm believer in his own religion. But this, on a closer examination, will be found entirely without foundation: on the contrary, he piques himself not a little, on the distinction of his nation from all others, by the knowledge and worship of the true God. But he did not write his history to make proselytes, and therefore chose to put on those parts of his work which he thought would expose him most to the sneer of the infidel, such a gloss as would make it pass more easily with gentile, and even with philosophical readers, (for he had an eye to both) amongst whom he knew the Jews were branded with credulity, even to a proverb. It may be thought, indeed, that with regard to the more ancient part of his history, as nothing in point of fact can be got from it, which is not to be learnt from the Bible, that part, at least, can be  
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of little or no service to christians. But even this conclusion would not be just. As the historian himself was a pharisee, a contemporary of the apostles, and one who lived till after the destruction of the Jewish temple and polity by Titus Vespasian, we may reap instruction even from his errors. They will serve to shew, what were the tenets of the sect at that time, what were their notions both concerning historical events, and sacred institutions, and what were some of their principal traditions. All this to the christian divine is a matter of no little consequence for the elucidation of several passages in the New Testament, which allude to such erroneous sentiments, and vain traditions. From the time of the rebuilding of the temple under Ezra, to its final demolition, and the total extinction of the Jewish government by the Romans, Josephus alone affords almost all the light we have.

The two books of Maccabees are the only other ancient monuments now extant of the transactions of that people within the aforesaid period. These books, though they are not acknowledged by protestants to be canonical scripture, very well deserve your attention as historical tracts of considerable antiquity, and, to all appearance, worthy of credit. We have, indeed, in English, an excellent work of Prideaux, called,

The Connection of the Old Testament history with that of the New, which I would also earnestly recommend to your perusal. I hope I scarcely need to mention, that it is more proper for the student to read Josephus in his own language than in a translation: it will thus answer a double end, as an exercise in Greek as well as in history.

To the knowledge of the sacred, it will be found proper to add as much at least of profane history, as is most nearly connected with it, and may serve to throw some light upon it, together with a little of the chronology and the geography of the times and the countries about which the history is conversant. The connection which the four great monarchies, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman, have with the Jewish history, is manifest; but as to these, it is by no means requisite that, in this place, I should be particular. The Jewish history is necessary to the theologian, the others are useful. The former ought to be begun immediately, the latter should be studied afterwards, as ye find leisure and opportunity: but we do not incline to embarrass you with a needless multiplicity of directions.

In the next prelection, I intend to begin with some observations on the history of the sacred canon.



## LECTURE II.

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THE subject of this day's discourse is, as I hinted to you at a former meeting, some observations on the nature and utility of the history of the sacred canon; to which I shall add some reflections, tending to explain both the origin and the character of that species of history which is denominated ecclesiastical. As to the history of the canon, it will be proper, in the first place, to give an explanation of the phrase. That book which we christians denominate *the Bible*, ἡ Βίβλος, the book, by way of eminence, and which is also termed the *canon*, and *the sacred canon*, comprehends a considerable number of treatises, or pieces totally distinct, composed (for the most part) at periods distant from one another, and in sundry places, written by diverse penmen, on different subjects, and in various styles: nor were they all originally in the same language. The greater part of the books which

compose the Old Testament, are in Hebrew, a small part in Chaldee, and all the books of the New Testament in Greek; at least, if the originals of any of them were in another tongue, they are not now extant: some are in prose, and others in verse; some are historical, some juridical, and some prophetical; some instruct us by the way of simple narrative; some are written in a highly figurative and allegoric diction; some in a vehement and declamatory; others address us in a free epistolary strain: one piece is a collection of devotional hymns and prayers, another is an assemblage of moral maxims and observations. The name *canon*, in like manner as the word *Bible*, we have borrowed from the Greek. The term κανων, with them, signifies *rule*, or *standard*. Now the Scriptures are thus denominated, as being eminently the great rule or standard to the christian, in all that concerns both faith and manners. Hence also those writings, of whose authenticity and inspiration there is sufficient evidence, are termed *canonical scripture*.

Now concerning the several books of which the Bible is composed, a number of questions naturally arise in the mind of the inquisitive student. Such are the following: Who were the writers and compilers, and at what periods, in what places, and on what occasions, were the writings

writings and compilations made? Whence arises that authority they have so generally obtained? Has this been an immediate, or a gradual consequence, of their publication? Has the christian world been unanimous in this respect, in regard to all these books, or has it been divided, as to all, or any of them? And if divided, what have been the most cogent arguments on the different sides? How, by whom, where, and when, were they collected into one volume? What hath been their fate and reception since? What have been the most remarkable editions and translations they have undergone? What the variations occasioned by these, and what the most eminent paraphrases and commentaries they have given rise to? I would not be understood by this enumeration, as meaning to insinuate, that all these questions are of the same importance. There is a manifest and very considerable difference among them in this respect. A succinct account, however, of all the facts, which would serve for a solution to the several queries above-mentioned, those at least which are of principal moment to the theologian, would constitute what is commonly called the history of the sacred canon.

The utility of such inquiries to the theologian is the point which naturally comes next to be discussed. As the questions themselves are pretty  
different

different in their nature, however much connected by their concurrence in composing the history of the Bible, the purposes they are fitted to answer are also different. In order to prevent mistakes, let it be observed once for all, that by the history of the Bible, I do not here mean, the history contained in the Bible, but the history of the compilement, and of the various fates of the book so denominated. The same thing may be said of that synonymous phrase, the history of the canon. As to those queries which regard the origin of the sacred books, they are chiefly conducive for confirming the truth of our religion; and as to those which regard their reception, good or bad, with all the consequences it hath produced, they are chiefly conducive for illustrating its doctrines. I use the word *chiefly* in both cases, because, in inquiries into the origin of the scriptures, discoveries will sometimes be made, which serve to illustrate and explain the meaning of things contained in them; and, on the other hand, in inquiries into their reception, with its consequences, we shall often be enabled to discover the grounds of the favourable reception they have met with, and thereby to trace the vestiges of a divine original. To the former class belong questions like these: Who were the writers? When, where, for whose use, and to what purpose were they written?

Whence



Whence arises the veneration they have drawn? Why, by whom, and on what occasion or occasions, were they collected? To the latter class belong the following, In what manner have they been received in different countries, and at different periods? To what causes does the reception, whether good or bad, appear imputable? What are the most eminent editions? What are the principal variations to be found in the editions and manuscripts still extant? What translators and commentators have been occupied in conveying and illustrating their doctrine to the most remote nations and distant ages? In the discussion of such questions, especially in what regards the books of the New Testament, there arises a number of curious investigations, tending to discriminate the genuine productions of the authors, whose names they bear, from the spurious pieces ascribed to them, the authentic dictates of the Holy Spirit from those which, at most, can only be styled apocryphal, that is hidden or doubtful. That the church was early pestered with a multitude of fictitious accounts of the life of Christ, and the labours of his apostles, is manifest not only from the concurrent testimony of all antiquity, but even from the introduction which the evangelist Luke hath given to his Gospel: “Forasmuch,” says he, “as many have taken in hand to set forth in  
“ order

“order a declaration of those things which are  
 “most surely believed among us.” It is uni-  
 versally acknowledged, that John’s Gospel was  
 not written till a considerable time afterwards ;  
 and if none had preceded Luke in this work but  
 Matthew and Mark, he would never have deno-  
 minated them *many*. Besides, it is plain, from  
 the manner in which preceding attempts are  
 mentioned, that several of the accounts that had  
 been given, were such as could not be depended  
 on ; otherwise, this circumstance, that many had  
 undertaken the work before him, instead of being  
 a good reason for his taking up the subject,  
 would have been a very strong reason for his not  
 doing it, since christians were already so amply  
 supplied with information. But the very expres-  
 sions he uses, evidently contain an insinuation,  
 at least, that the writers he alludes to, had not  
 themselves been sufficiently informed of the  
 truth. “It seemed good to me,” says he,  
 “having had perfect understanding of all  
 “things, from the very first, to write them to  
 “thee in order, most excellent Theophilus.”

But to return to the two classes into which  
 the questions relating to the history of the canon  
 were divided, they will generally be found, agree-  
 ably to the observation already made, concern-  
 ing the principal utility of each, to be treated by  
 authors of different denominations, and with  
 different

different views. Those who, as defenders of revelation, have entered the lists with its adversaries, more especially those, who, like Stillingfleet, in the last age, or Lardner, in the present, have applied themselves to support the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures, did always consider themselves as under a necessity of doing something for our satisfaction, in regard to the questions of the first order. Those, on the other hand, who have assumed the character not of the champions of religion, but of its interpreters, do commonly attach themselves more to the discussion of the questions of the second order. Accordingly, we find a great deal of information on these topics in the works of some of our scriptural critics; whether they come under the denomination of scholiasts, paraphrasts, commentators, translators, or barely editors, particularly the two last. The only examples of these I shall now mention, are, Houbigant's prolegomena to the different parts into which he has divided his Latin version of the Old Testament, and Mill's and Wetstein's prolegomena to the splendid and valuable editions they have given of the Greek New Testament, with the various readings. These I only mention by the way as deserving to be carefully perused by you, if you should happen to meet with them. For all the three (especially the first) being voluminous and  
expensive

expensive works, and not very common, there are not many that, in this part of the world, have an opportunity of consulting them.

There is, indeed, one author, who, in a particular work written on purpose, has, with a good deal of judgment and acuteness, treated all the questions of both classes above enumerated: the author I mean, is Richard Simon, a priest of the Oratory, commonly known by the name of Father Simon. This man first published, in French, a book, entitled, *A critical History of the Old Testament*, which was soon after followed by another in the same language, entitled, *A critical History of the New Testament*; both which together complete the history of the sacred canon. This work has been translated, not badly, into Latin. There is a translation of it into English [which I have seen] that is very ill executed, in regard both to the sense and to the expression. In relation to the character of the performance, it will not be improper to make here a few observations. In the first place, it clearly evinces in the author a large fund of erudition, accompanied with an uncommon share of critical sagacity and penetration; and, I may justly add, a greater degree of moderation, than is generally to be met with in those, either of his sect as a romanist, or of his order as a priest. What particularly qualified him for the task he

has



has undertaken, was not only his thorough acquaintance with ancient history, sacred and profane ; but his profound skill in the oriental languages, and in all branches of rabbinical literature. To say thus much is no more, in my apprehension, than doing justice to his abilities and indefatigable application : at the same time, it is but doing justice to you, my hearers, to take notice of what I think amiss in his performance. I told you, and told you truly, that he shows more moderation than is customary with those of his sect and order, yet not so much of impartiality, as not to betray, on several occasions, that (if he was not a disguised freethinker, as has been suspected by some eminent catholics) he was deeply tinctured with the servile spirit of his church. Hence the implicit deference he sometimes officiously displays, to human prescriptions, to oral tradition, to those customs which can plead the sanction of antiquity, or of a general reception, however absurd they may be, when examined on the principles of reason, however unscriptural, or even antiscriptural, when examined on those of holy writ : nay, I might add, his deference to those practices and tenets, concerning which his knowledge and discernment must have satisfied him, that their origin was such as could by no means serve to recommend them. Hence also the propensity

he shows, on every occasion, to insist on the ambiguity and obscurity of the scriptures, which he greatly exaggerates, and on the need of an infallible interpreter. Hence the straitened and ambiguous manner wherein he expresseth himself on some delicate points, which he could not altogether avoid mentioning, and on which it is plain that he did not think himself at liberty to speak out his sentiments. On such topics, ye will perceive a timidity and caution very unlike the generous freedom and boldness of a man, who hath ever been unaccustomed to the galling yoke of human authority. He puts one in mind of the situation described by the poet, and even appears to consider himself, as, *incedens per ignes suppositos cineri doloso*. But I shall say no more here of this author, having had an occasion, of late, both of giving, and of supporting my opinion, of him, more fully in the third preliminary dissertation to the translation of the Gospels, to which I refer you. As to his work, I may justly say, that on the whole, with all its errors and defects, (and what human composition is exempt from errors and defects?) The critical History of the Old and New Testaments contains a valuable fund of knowledge, and deserves an attentive perusal from every serious inquirer into the divine oracles. On some points, he has been warmly opposed by some protestant divines,

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to whose animadversions on his work he has returned answers. The controversy is published in the later editions of his book. In some things they appear to be in the right, but not in all.

Houbigant, also, another priest of the oratory, has, in the work of his above-mentioned, freely animadverted on some of Simon's observations. He too is no inconsiderable critic, though of a very different turn. The excess of Simon (where alterations appeared necessary) perhaps was diffidence; of Houbigant, temerity. I am not sure, that some of our modern English critics on the Hebrew scriptures are not chargeable with this fault of Houbigant; I mean their making too free with the text, in setting aside the common reading for the sake of emendations merely conjectural. But as to these things, every person ought to judge for himself. I purpose to lay only the materials before you, which may serve as premisses: it is yours to canvass and arrange them, and to draw the proper conclusions. It is not my province to dictate, but to suggest. Your assent to any opinions, that might be laid before you, would be of little value, if it were the result of a lazy and implicit confidence, and not of a careful examination and rational conviction. Let me only subjoin, before dismissing this article, a recommendation of Michaelis's Introductory Lectures to the sacred books of the New

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Testament, which will deserve your serious perusal. Thus much shall suffice for what concerns the history of the canon, and the valuable purposes to which this branch of knowledge is subservient.

I proceed now to consider the ends which may be answered by ecclesiastical history, and to inquire what is the readiest and most profitable way of studying it. Before that memorable era, the incarnation of the Son of God, the history of the church of God was the history of one particular people, first distinguished by the name of the patriarch Israel, (otherwise called Jacob) whose descendants they were; and after the loss of the ten tribes, who were carried into captivity by Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria, denominated from Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, and one whose progeny the greater part of the remnant were, the nation of the Jews. The history of that people, and the history of the church, was under the Mosaic economy the same thing. Neither do we find in the annals, and other remains of those ancient times, the least vestige of the distinction of a community into church and state, such as hath obtained universally in the nations who have received the christian law. This distinction hath given rise to a species of history, whereof the world before had not conceived so much as an idea. It may not there-



fore be improper, in the first place, to trace its origin, that we may the better apprehend what is meant by the history of the church.

When we consider attentively the institution of Moses, we perceive that it comprehends every thing necessary for forming a civil establishment; not only precepts regarding the disposition and morals of the people, and the public and private offices of religion, but also laws of jurisprudence; such as regulate the formalities of private contracts, inheritance, succession, and purchases; such as fix the limits of jurisdiction and subordination of judicatories, appoint the method of procedure in trials, both civil and criminal, and the punishments to be awarded by the judges to the several crimes. I may add, it comprehends also a sort of law of nations for the use of that people, in adjusting the terms of their intercourse with other states and kingdoms, and prescribing rules to be observed in making and conducting peace and war, entering into public treaties and the like. In this polity or state, however, we find that what concerns religion forms an essential, or rather the principal part. Every thing in their constitution seems to act in subserviency to this great end, the preservation of the purity of their faith and worship. In this there was a very material difference between them and pagan nations. In these last, the established superstition,

tion, in whatever popular traditions it may have been originally founded, was modelled by the ruling powers in such a manner, as that it might best answer the purpose of an engine of government. The religion of such nations, therefore, can be considered in no other light, than as one of those political machines which in various ways co-operated for the support of the whole. With the Jews, indeed, the case was totally different: for, in their establishment, the religion was manifestly not the means but the end.

God hath been considered as in some respect the chief magistrate or head of that community, and the government for that reason has been not unfitly termed a theocracy. Thus much seems even implied in the words of God to Samuel, when the people became solicitous to have a king. And even when the kingly sway was established among them, the preservation of their religion, and of their code of laws, contained in the Pentateuch, (for they had no other) effectually prevented this change from being a subversion of their polity. The king himself was considered (though in a way somewhat different) as a minister of religion. His office was holy, and he was inaugurated with the like religious ceremony of unction, with which the high-priest was separated for the discharge of the duties of his sacred function; and the king's person, in consequence  
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of this rite, was accounted holy as well as the priest's. A strong evidence of the influence of this circumstance we have in the behaviour of David to king Saul, his enemy, who sought his life. David found him asleep and unattended in the cave of Engeddi; and when desired by some of his followers to kill him, answered, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord: so David stayed his servants with these words." Nevertheless the legislative power was not in the monarch. God was the sole legislator; for, as was observed, they had no permanent body of laws other than the books of Moses: besides, on every emergency of importance, the deity was consulted by Urim and Thummin.

It must be acknowledged, that this original constitution was gradually corrupted by them. Having found means, in prejudice to the divine commandments, to foist in rules and precepts of their own devising, under the specious name of oral traditions, they rendered them equivalent to laws; but still, as appears from the name they gave them, under the pretended sanction of divine authority. Thus their religious and civil rights were so blended, as not to admit a separation; the same judges indiscriminately took cog-

nizance of both. These were the elders of the city in smaller matters, and in the first instance; and the great sanhedrim, senate, or council of the nation, composed of seventy senators and a president, commonly called the elders of the people, in greater matters, and in the last resort. And in this body there was generally a considerable number, though not any fixed proportion, of priests, levites, and scribes. I mention, in conformity to our modes of thinking, the religious and the civil as different kinds of rights. Their customs and modes of thinking, on the contrary, prevented their making this distinction; all being alike comprehended in the same code, established by the same authority, and under the jurisdiction of the same magistrates. An attention to this is necessary, in order to make us understand the import of some expressions used in the New Testament. Thus the terms νομικοι and νομοδιδασκαλοι, which our translators render lawyers and doctors of law, are precisely equivalent to what would be termed by us theologists and doctors of divinity. Not that the words are mistranslated in our version: it was even proper in this case, by paying a regard to the etymology of the names, in rendering them into English, to suggest to the unlearned reader the coincidence of the two professions, divinity and law, among the Hebrews. With them,



them, therefore, the divine and the jurist, the lawyer and the scribe, were terms which denoted nearly the same character; inasmuch as they had no other law of nations, or municipal law, but their religion, and no other religion but their law. Of any of the Pagan nations we may say with justice, that their religion was a political religion; but of the Jews we should say more properly, that their polity was a religious polity.

What may serve to give us an idea of such a constitution is the present state of the Mahometan world. Though Mahometism, in regard to its doctrine and its rites, borrows somewhat both from Judaism and from Christianity, it is, as an establishment, raised more on the Jewish model than on the Christian. With them the Alcoran is the only standing or statute law of the country; and as it is conceived by them to be of divine authority, and therefore unrepealable, it is both the only rule in all judiciary proceedings, and the only check upon the despotism of their princes. Hence it has happened, that though there never arose such a conception among the Jews, as what I may call the history of the synagogue, or among the Mahometans, as the history of the mosque, distinct from the histories of their different nations; the christian church and christian empires, or commonwealths, form histories, which,

though connected as those of neighbouring republics or kingdoms may be, are in their nature perfectly distinct. It is worth while to inquire, what has given rise to this peculiarity in the religion of Jesus. An inquiry of this kind is a proper introduction to the study of ecclesiastical history. It will serve to throw light on the spirit and genius of our religion, and may lead to the detection of the latent springs, whence originally flowed that amazing torrent of corruption, by which, in process of time, this most amiable religion has been so miserably defaced.

The moral precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ are remarkably sublime and pure. They are admirably calculated for regulating the passions and affections of the heart, out of which, as Solomon has observed, are the issues of life. The doctrines he taught, which are the motives whereby an observance of the precepts is enforced, are all purely spiritual, arising from considerations of the divine nature, and of our own; especially of God's placability and favour, of the testimony of conscience, of the blessedness which the principles of true religion, faith, and hope, love to God, and love to man, infuse into the heart; and from considerations regarding the future retribution both of the righteous and of the wicked. The positive institutions or ceremonies he appointed, are both few and simple, serving

serving as expressions of the love and gratitude of his disciples to God, their common parent, and to Jesus their master, the oracle of God; of their engagements to the christian life, and their perfect union among themselves. And that whilst these institutions were suffered to remain in their native simplicity, which constituted their true beauty and excellence, it was impossible they should be misunderstood. With regard to the founding of what might be called a polity or state, it is manifest that nothing could be farther from his intention. "His kingdom," he acquaints us, "is not of this world." It is not of a secular nature, to be either propagated or defended by the arm of flesh, or to have its laws enforced by human sanctions, or any such temporal punishments as merely human authority can inflict.

It is impossible to conceive a greater contrast between the spirit which his instructions breathe, and that spirit of pride and domination, which not many centuries afterwards became the predominant spirit of what then came to be denominated the church. Again and again did Christ admonish his apostles, and other followers, to live as brethren and equals, not to affect a superiority over their fellow-disciples, or over one another; inasmuch as in this, his kingdom would differ in its fundamental maxims from all  
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the kingdoms of the world: that that person alone would there be deemed the greatest, whose deportment should be the humblest, and he alone superior, who should prove most serviceable to the rest. As to worldly monarchies or commonwealths, of whatever kind, he taught them to regard it as their duty, to submit to such powers as providence should set over them; cheerfully paying tribute, and yielding obedience to every human ordinance and command that should not be found to contradict the law of God. “Render to Cæsar,” said he, “the things which are Cæsar’s, and to God the things which are God’s.” Far from affecting any secular power himself, he refused a royalty of this sort, when the people would have conferred it, and would not take upon him to decide in a matter of civil right and property, though desired. “Man,” said he to the person who applied to him, “who made me a judge or a divider over you?” Then he said to the people, “take heed and beware of covetousness:”—supporting his admonition as usual by an affecting parable. It was the end of his institution to purify the heart, and his lessons were ever calculated for extirpating the seeds of evil that remained there. In a similar manner, when the disciples privately contended among themselves who should be greatest, he took occasion to warn them against ambition.



ambition. Jesus calling to him a child, placed him in the midst of them, and said, “ Verily I “ say unto you ; unless ye be converted,” quite changed in your notions and conceptions of things, “ and become as children, ye shall never “ enter the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, “ therefore, shall become humble as this child, “ shall be the greatest there.” The same maxims were warmly inculcated by his apostles ; and in their time, under the happy influence of their instructions, generally prevailed among christians.

Now indeed was formed a community of the disciples of Jesus, which was called his church, a word that denotes no more than society or assembly, and is sometimes used in the New Testament with evident analogy to the common use, to signify the whole community of christians considered as one body, of which Christ is denominated the head, and sometimes only a particular congregation of christians. In this general society, founded in the unity of their faith, their hope, their love, cemented, as it were, by a communion or joint participation, as occasion offered, in religious offices, in adoration, in baptism, and in the commemoration of the sufferings of their Lord, preserved by a most friendly intercourse, and by frequent instructions, admonitions, reproofs when necessary, and

and even by the exclusion of those who had violated such powerful and solemn engagements: in all this, I say, there was nothing that interfered with the temporal powers. They claimed no jurisdiction over the person, the liberty, or the property of any man. And if they expelled out of their own society, and, on satisfying their conditions, re-admitted those who had been expelled, they did in this only exercise a right, which (if we may compare great things with small, and heavenly things with earthly) any private company, like a knot of artists or philosophers, may freely exercise; namely, to give the benefit of their own company and conversation to whom, and on what terms, they judge proper: a right which can never justly be considered as in the least infringing on the secular powers. The christians every where acknowledged themselves the subjects of the state, whether monarchical or republican, absolute or free, under which they lived; entitled to the same privileges with their fellow-subjects, and bound as much as any of them (I might say more, in respect of the peculiar obligation which their religion laid them under) to the observance of the laws of their country. They pleaded no exemption but in one case; a case wherein every man, though not a christian, has a natural title to exemption; that is, not to obey a law which is  
unjust

unjust in itself, and which he is persuaded in his conscience to be so. But in regard to rights merely of a personal or private nature, over which the individual has a greater power, far from being pertinacious asserters of these, they held it for an invariable maxim, that it is much better to suffer wrong, than either to commit or to avenge it. This, in my judgement, is the true footing on which the apostolical church stood in relation to the secular powers. To what causes the wonderful change afterwards produced, ought to be attributed, I intend to make the subject of another prelection.

## LECTURE III.

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I CONCLUDED the last discourse I gave you on the subject of Sacred History, with an account of the origin and primitive nature of the christian church. I observed to you, that being founded in the concurrence of its members in the faith of the doctrine, and the observance of the precepts of Christ their common Lord, and being supported by brotherly affection one to another, as well as ardent zeal for the happiness of the whole, it was in no respect calculated to interfere with the rights of princes, or afford matter of umbrage or jealousy to the secular powers. But what God makes upright, man always corrupts by his inventions. This was the case of the human species itself. This was the case of the first religion, call it traditional, or call it natural, which, in process of time, did, in the different nations of the earth, degenerate into the grossest idolatry and abominations. And as to what has been  
commu-



communicated since by written revelation, this was certainly the case of the preceding or Mosai-cal institution. And this, upon inquiry, will be found to have been eminently the case of the present or christian dispensation.

When the disciples in populous cities began to multiply, as no association of imperfect creatures will ever be found, in all respects, perfect, it is by no means strange, that sometimes differences and interferences should arise between individuals concerning matters of property and civil right. These differences occasioned law-suits before the ordinary judges who were pagans. Law-suits, as might be expected, not only occasioned, to the great prejudice of charity, heart-burnings among themselves, but tended to bring a scandal on the profession, whose criterion or badge had been expressly declared by their master to be their mutual love. Examples there were of these mischiefs as early as the times of the apostles, particularly at Corinth, a city abounding in wealth and luxury. The apostle Paul, effectually to remedy this evil, and to prevent the scandal and hurt which must arise from its continuance, first expostulates with the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi. 1. &c.) on the nature and dignity of their christian vocation, to which it would be much more suitable patiently to suffer injuries, than, with so imminent a risk of charity, to endeavour to ob-  
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tain redress:—"Why do ye not rather," says he, "take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" And even should the injury appear too great to be entirely overlooked, he enjoins them, and with them doubtless all christians in the like circumstances, to submit those differences, which should unhappily arise among them, to arbitrators chosen from among themselves. By this expedient a double end would be answered: the parties would, by the mediation of their brethren, be more easily conciliated to each other, and the reproach of the heathen would be prevented. It is evident that in this there was no encroachment on the province of the magistrate. A similar practice, ever since the Babylonish captivity, had obtained among the Jews in all the countries through which they were dispersed. To put an end to differences, either by compromise or by arbitration, is the exercise of a natural right, which all civil establishments acknowledge, and which most of them shew a disposition to encourage and promote. Jars and quarrels are universally admitted to be evils, though unavoidable in the present lapsed condition of human nature. Judicatories are erected to put an end betimes to these evils. The litigation of the parties, though a bad consequence, is permitted solely to prevent a worse. But no human polity commands men

to be litigious. The less a man is so, he is the better subject of the state. The apostle's aim is to crush strife as early as possible, and to prevent an ill effect, though not the worst effect, of private differences; to wit, public contention in courts of law. His advice is such as every good man, every lover of peace, and therefore every good citizen, would very readily give to the members of any society in which he had a concern. It was, besides, perfectly suitable to the peaceful maxims of his great master: "Resist  
" not evil. Agree with thine adversary quickly  
" whilst thou art in the way with him." And  
" Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be  
" called the children of God."

Let it be remarked further, that those primitive and chosen arbiters claimed no coercive power of any kind over their fellow-christians. The judgment they pronounced was very properly termed, in primitive times, the judgment of charity or love. By this principle alone were the judges influenced (without salary or emoluments) to undertake the office: by this principle alone were the parties disposed to submit to the sentence: and by this principle alone, where an injury had been committed, the offender was induced, as far as possible, to make reparation, and the offended as readily to grant forgiveness. No mention do we find of bailiffs or tipstaves,

fines, imprisonments, or distraining of goods. As their principal view in examining and deciding such questions was the radical cure of the evil, that is, of every thing that might look like animosity or discontent among the disciples of Christ; they neither had, nor desired to have any other means of enforcing their decisions, than such as the love of peace and union, and the interest of the common cause necessarily gave them. To have applied, as umpires in christian states are wont, for the interposition of the secular arm to enforce their decrees, would have been recurring to that very evil, for the prevention of which they had been nominated as judges by their brethren.

It deserves also to be taken notice of, that the apostle, far from taking upon him to assign this office of terminating their differences to such as he might think properly qualified, does not so much as recommend, or even mention to them any individual, or any class of men. On the contrary, he leaves the matter intirely to their own free choice. And indeed it was proper it should be so. This expedient is recommended purely from the charitable and prudential considerations of decency and peace. These could not be promoted otherwise than by the people's perfect confidence, not only in the equity but in the abilities of the persons to be entrusted, who  
therefore



therefore doubtless ought to be of their electing. Besides, it would have ill suited the genuine but spiritual dignity of the apostolic office, for Paul, so unlike the examples given by his Lord, to have assumed an authoritative direction in matters merely temporal. For this reason I am inclined to think that, if he had judged it necessary to offer his opinion as to the particular persons proper to be chosen, he would have judged it fitter to exempt the pastors from a charge which might, in some respects, appear foreign from their office, than to recommend them to it.

The consequence however in fact was, that at least in several congregations or churches, the choice fell upon their ministers, a very natural effect of that confidence and respect which, in those times of purity, we have ground to believe they merited. Nor let it be imagined, from any thing advanced above, that this was a charge which the ministers of religion, as things then stood, ought to have declined: I have indeed acknowledged, that, in some respects, the cognizance of secular matters did not so naturally unite with their spiritual functions. But, consider the affair in another view, and we shall find that both in regard to the motive which influenced them, and the end which their acceptance of this task tended to promote, there was a real

suitableness to the nature and design of their office. Hardly could ambition be supposed to operate in inducing them to accept a charge which added to their labour, and exposed them the more to the notice of the common enemy, and consequently to danger, without adding to their wealth, or rank, or even power in the common acceptation of the term. For the award of these judges was no more than the declaration of their opinion; and the execution of the sentence was no more than the voluntary acquiescence of the parties. The pastors derived no kind of authority from this prerogative, except that which integrity and discernment invariably secure with those for whose benefit these talents are exerted. An authority this which depends intirely on the right discharge of the trust, and is incompatible with the abuse of it. Their motive therefore could only be the charitable desire of making peace and preventing offences. The harmony of christians among themselves, and their unblemished reputation in respect of the heathen, were no less manifestly the blessed ends to which their labour of love contributed.

But might it not be urged, on the other hand, that this work would infallibly prove an avocation from the spiritual and more important duties of their office? In those early ages, before the love of many had waxed cold, before the christian

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tian congregations were become either so numerous or so opulent, as some time afterwards they became, it is not to be imagined that such questions, in relation to property and civil rights, would be either so frequent, or so intricate, as to occupy a considerable portion of the arbitrator's time, and thereby interfere with his other more essential duties. Had it been otherwise, this judicious charge ought doubtless, from the beginning, to have been devolved into other hands. The apostles themselves, we find, at first took the trouble of distributing to the people, according to the respective necessities of each, the money which the charity and zeal of the converts had thrown into the common stock. But when this work became so burdensome, as to interfere with the peculiar functions of the apostleship, they made no delay in resigning it to others. "It is not reason," said they, "that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." The like part no doubt ought those primitive pastors to have acted; the like part no doubt they would have acted, had there been the like occasion. That they did not, ought to be accounted by us as sufficient evidence that the like occasion did not exist, and that the task was then no way cumbersome. They had apostolical example alike for undertaking an office of benevolence, when it did not interfere, and for renouncing it

when it did interfere, with the sacred duties of their spiritual function.

But to return, this custom of nominating their pastors to be arbitrators of all their differences in matters of civil property and right, from being pretty common, seems very quickly to have become general. The example of one christian society influenced another, who did not choose to appear deficient in any testimony of esteem for their teachers. From being general it became universal. Every congregation would think it proper to avoid distinguishing themselves by a singularity, which would be understood to reflect either on the judgment or the discretion of their pastors.

Some learned men seem to be of opinion, that the business of determining such civil controversies as arose between christians, belonged at first to the whole congregation; or, in other words, to that particular church or society whereof the parties concerned were members. But this mistake appears to have arisen from confounding two things totally distinct. When one christian had ground, real or supposed, to complain of the conduct of another as unbrotherly and injurious, after private methods of reclaiming the offender had been tried in vain by the offended, it belonged to the congregation to judge between them; and either to effect a reconciliation, or to discard one  
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who, by his obstinacy in the wrong, shewed himself unworthy of their fellowship. This method had been clearly pointed out to them by their great founder. “If thy brother,” says he, “trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” What ye thus do, agreeably to the instructions I give you, God himself will ratify. The practice of the apostolic age, which has the best title to the denomination of primitive, is the surest commentary on this precept of our Lord. Not only were such private offences then judged by the church, that is, the congregation, but also those scandals which affected the whole christian fraternity. Accordingly, the judgment which Paul, by the spirit of God, had formed concerning the incestuous person, he enjoins the church, to whom his epistle is directed, that is, (to use his own words for an

explanation) "them who at Corinth are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, to pronounce and execute." And in his second epistle to the same church, (chap. ii. v. 6,) he says, in reference to the same delinquent, "Sufficient to such a man is the censure which was inflicted by many;" ὑπο των πλειονων, by the community. And (v. 10.) "To whom ye forgive any thing," addressing himself always to the congregation, "I forgive also." We admit, with the learned Dodwell\*, that in the censure inflicted on the incestuous person, the christians at Corinth were but the executors of the doom awarded by the apostle. Nor does any one question the apostolical authority in such matters over both the flock and the pastors. But from the words last quoted, it is evident that he acknowledges, at the same time, the ordinary power in regard to discipline lodged in the congregation; and from the confidence he had in the discretion and integrity of the Corinthians, he promises his concurrence in what they shall judge proper to do. "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also." Now, though in after-times the charge of this matter also came to be devolved, first on the bishop and presbyters, and afterwards solely on the bishop, yet that the

\* De Jure Laicorum sacerdotali, c. iii. § 10.

people, as well as the presbyters, as far down, at least, as to the middle of the third century, retained some share in the decision of questions wherein morals were immediately concerned, is manifest from Cyprian's letters still extant. In his time, when congregations were become very numerous, the inquiry and deliberation were holden (perhaps then more commodiously) in the ecclesiastical college, called the presbytery, consisting of the bishop, the presbyters, and the deacons. When this was over, the result of their inquiry and consultations was reported to the whole congregation belonging to that church, who were called together on purpose, in order to obtain their approbation of what had been done, and their consent to the resolution that had been taken: for without their consent, no judgment could regularly be put in execution.

But this is quite a different subject of inquiry from questions merely in regard to right or property. The one is more analogous to a criminal, the other to a civil process. Two persons may differ in regard to the title to a particular subject, each claiming it as his, though neither accuse the other of injurious, or unchristian treatment; it is not because these pleas always spring from some malignity of disposition, that this amicable method of terminating them is recommended; but it is because there is an imminent

ment hazard, that if long continued, and brought to public, they breed some malignity in the minds of the parties towards each other, and afford a handle to idolaters to blaspheme the good ways of the Lord. Now it is manifest, in the first place, that questions of civil right are not so much within the sphere of the multitude, as those which concern practical religion and morals; and secondly, that the apostle does not recommend it to the people to take such secular matters under their own cognizance collectively, but only to appoint proper persons to judge in them. "If then," says he, "ye have judgment of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church." In the epithet *least esteemed*, I imagine he couches an ironical reproof to the Corinthians, for their appearing to be at a loss in finding persons proper to discuss matters in themselves of very little moment compared with those with which, as christians, they were conversant. But to guard against being mistaken by too literal an interpretation of his words, he immediately subjoins, "I speak this to shame you. Is it so, that there is not a wise man amongst you? No, not one, that shall be able to judge between his brethren?" So that it appears extremely probable, that unless what was first only a civil controversy, afterwards became  
a scandal,



a scandal, by the improper behaviour of one or both of the litigants, the people did not intermeddle in the cause. They left it intirely to the arbiters, or wise men, whom they had nominated for the purpose: and these, as was observed before, came at last universally to be the pastors.

Time, the greatest of all innovators, though, when it operates by slow degrees, the least observable; (time, I say) which alters every thing, did, from the universality of the practice of committing this trust to the pastors, and from its continuance for a course of successions in their hands, at length, in effect, establish it as a right. As charity cooled, ambition, a very subtle passion, insensibly insinuated itself. This it would do at first more modestly under the guise of public virtue, as a desire of being more extensively useful to the people, afterwards more boldly, as a commendable zeal for every thing that could be deemed a prerogative of the sacred order. When persecutions had ceased, the churches, as they grew in the number and the wealth of their members, produced, in proportion, more fruits of contention, and fewer of brotherly love. Every thing, then, that might give any sort of ascendancy over the minds of others, would be greedily grasped at: and this privilege of judging, in civil matters, would then be very naturally claimed by the bishops, as a  
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part of their office. It must, however, be acknowledged, that though, in particular instances, this trust might be abused, it was, upon the whole, expedient for the christian brotherhood, and could scarcely be considered as dangerous so long as it remained on the original footing, and was unsupported by the secular arm.

But when christianity came to receive the countenance and sanction of the ruling powers, the Roman emperors imagined they could not more effectually show their zeal for the cause of Christ, than by confirming every prerogative which had been considered as belonging to his ministers. It is, besides, not unlikely, that the happy influence which the pastoral decisions, aided by the authority of religion, generally had in composing differences among the people, would prove an additional motive for their interposition in support of a practice seemingly so conducive to public utility. But whatever be in this, so it was, that the bishop's power of judging, in secular matters, was not only ratified by law, but through an ill-judged indulgence, as soon appeared by the event, was further extended, backed by the secular arm, and rendered compulsory. Constantine, the first christian emperor, made a law, that the sentence of the bishop should, in every case, be final, and that the magistrate should be obliged to execute it, that

if in any cause depending before the secular judge, in any stage of the process, either party, though in direct opposition to the other party, should appeal to the bishop; to his tribunal, from which there could be no appeal, the cause should instantly be remitted.

Then, indeed, began the episcopal judgment to be properly forensic, having compulsive execution by the ministry of the magistrate. Then, indeed, began the prelates, for the greater state and dignity, in their judicial proceedings, to adopt the model and appendages of civil judicatories, and to have their chancellors, commissaries, officials, advocates, proctors, registers, apparitors, &c. &c. Then originated these phrases unheard before, *episcopal jurisdiction*, *episcopal audience*, and other such like. When one considers the origin of ecclesiastical judicature, as deduced above, and the reasons for which some expedient of this sort was first recommended by Paul to the Corinthians, it is impossible to conceive any thing more unsuitable to his design, than the footing on which it was now established. One principal ground for which the apostle advised the measure, was to avoid the scandal which one christian suing another before a tribunal of infidels, must necessarily bring upon their religion. "Brother," says he, "goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers."

“ lievers.” Now this evil was radically cured when christianity became the established religion, and the secular judges themselves were taken from the christian brotherhood. I acknowledge, however, that this is not the only ground of the apostle’s recommendation: his other reason is, that to prevent law-suits entirely, by a compromise of any differences that might arise, or by a friendly reference to proper umpires, would be greatly conducive to the cause of charity, which is the common cause, by preserving peace among themselves: but no sooner is the bishop, or indeed any man, vested with legal and coercive authority, insomuch that people can be compelled to appear before him, and to submit to his sentence, than he ceases to be an umpire, his court is erected into a secular tribunal, and the procedure before him is as really a law-suit as that which is carried on before any other judge. All the weight, therefore, of the apostle’s second reason from fraternal love, operates as strongly against suing an adversary in this court, as it does against suing him in any other.

It was not at first understood, or duly attended to, how great the change was, which this new arrangement of Constantine made in the constitution of the empire. It was, in effect, throwing the whole judiciary power of the state into  
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the hands of the clergy. All the ordinary judicatories were now reduced to act solely in subordination to the spiritual courts, which could overrule the proceedings of the secular, whilst their own were not liable to be overruled by any. The civil magistrate who might be compelled to execute their sentences, but was not entitled to revise or alter them, was, in fact, no better than the bishop's serjeant. His office, in this instance, was by no means magisterial, it was merely ministerial and subservient.

It was in vain, at the period at which we are now arrived, to imagine, that in the same way as formerly, a sense of religion should operate on the minds of the people. This is a sentiment of too delicate a nature to be rendered compatible with the measures now adopted. From the moment the pastor was armed with the terrors of the magistrate, the power of religion was superseded, and the gentle voice of love was drowned in the clamour of commitments, forfeitures, and distress of goods. It deserves also to be remarked, that whilst matters remained on the primitive footing, there was the strongest tie on the pastors to a strict observance of equity, as it was thence only that their judgments could derive authority, or command respect. The power itself was of such a nature, as could not long subsist after being perverted; the case was quite  
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different now. It appeared of little consequence to draw respect to a verdict, to which they could enforce obedience: and this could equally be effected, whatever were the sentence, just or unjust, reasonable or absurd. Of the like pernicious tendency, as they flowed from the same cause, were the measures that were afterwards adopted to enforce ecclesiastical censures and excommunications, by the sanction of civil laws, inflicting pains and penalties. When so much depended on the dignitaries of the church, they could not fail to meet with all the adulation, and other seductive arts, by which the favour of the great and powerful is, through the influence of avarice, and other irregular desires, commonly courted by inferiours and dependents. Whether this would contribute to improve these shepherds of the flock in humility and meekness, may be submitted to the determination of every impartial and judicious hearer. One favourable circumstance, however, which perhaps inclined the people more easily to acquiesce in it, was, that it was the only considerable check which they had, for ages, on the too absolute power of the emperor. It is thus that Providence, in the worst of circumstances, is ever at work, bringing good out of evil, making usurpations on different sides balance and controul one another, and render-

rendering the greatest calamities reciprocal correctives.

But to proceed in our narration: the emperor Valens still enlarged the jurisdiction of the bishops, assigning to them the charge of fixing the prices of all vendible commodities, which was, it must be owned, a most extraordinary assignment. It is but doing justice to some worthy bishops to declare, that far from being gratified by these changes, they loudly complained of them. Posidonius relates concerning Augustine in particular, that though he gave attendance to this forensic business all the morning, sometimes till dinner-time, and sometimes till night, he was wont to say, that it was a great grievance to him, as it diverted his attention from what was much more properly his charge; that it was, in fact, to leave things useful, and to attend to things tumultuous and perplexed; that saint Paul had not assumed this office to himself, well knowing how unsuitable it was to that of a preacher of the Gospel, but was desirous that it should be given to others. Such were the sentiments of that respectable father of the church. But every bishop was not of the same mind with Augustine.

About seventy years afterwards, when this authority came to be very much abused, the law of Constantine was repealed by Arcadius and

Honorius, who limited the bishops, in civil matters, to those only which were referred to their judgment by the consent of both the litigants. But in some cities the bishops were already become too powerful, and too rich, to be so easily dispossessed. In Rome particularly, this new regulation had little or no effect, till Valentinian, about the middle of the fifth century, being himself in Rome, renewed it, and caused it to be put in execution. However, it was soon afterwards revoked by subsequent princes, who restored to the clergy a great part of that jurisdiction which had been taken away. Justinian in particular established the episcopal tribunal, allotting to it, in the first place, all causes that could be any way understood to concern religion, then the ecclesiastical delinquencies of clergymen, and also diverse sorts of voluntary jurisdiction over the laity. By the methods above recited, it happened, we find at last, that the brotherly corrections, and charitable interpositions, instituted by Christ and his apostles, degenerated into mere worldly domination. When, on the one hand, the ministers of religion thought fit to exchange that parental tenderness, which was the glory of their predecessors, for that lordly superiority which succeeded, it was a natural consequence, that, on the other hand, the amiable reverence of the child should be over-



overwhelmed in the fearful submission of the slave. "Perfect love," says the apostle John, "casteth out fear." It is no less true in the converse. "Perfect fear casteth out love." The great engine of the magistrate, is terroure; of the pastor, love. The advancement of the one is the destruction of the other. To attempt to combine them in the same character, is to attempt to form a hideous monster at the best. Paul understood the difference, and marked it well in his epistles, especially those to Timothy and to Titus. "The servant of the Lord," says he, "must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient and meek, not greedy of sordid lucre, no striker." The weapons of his warfare are not carnal: he forbears threatening, and does not employ the arm of flesh: his weapons are the soft powers of persuasion, animated by tenderness and love. In vain is it pretended, that the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, above explained, is not of the nature of dominion, like the secular. Where is the difference that can be called material? Is not the execution, wherever there is either opposition or delay on the part of him who is cast, effected ultimately by the same methods of coercion, imprisonment, distraining of goods, and the like, as in the temporal judicatories? Are not the parties loaded with expenses to the full

as heavy? Or are there not as many hungry vultures, retainers to the court, that must be satisfied? Is there not the same scope for contention, altercation, and chicane? Or are the processes in the spiritual courts (where such spiritual courts still subsist) less productive of feuds and animosities than in the secular?

In almost all cases wherein a particular mode of religion has obtained, in a country, a legal establishment, in preference to every other mode, there has been a strong tendency in the acts of the legislature to confound civil rights and civil authority with those that are purely moral or religious. Nor is it so easy a matter in practice, to ascertain the boundary, in every instance, and draw the line by which the one may be effectually discriminated from the other, as one at first would be apt to imagine. The distinction has been better preserved in our own country, notwithstanding the few exceptions of little moment which I shall mention, than perhaps in any other. There is a part of the office of a minister in this country that is purely of a civil nature, derived from the law of the land, and quite extraneous to the business of a pastor, which, in strictness, is only what is called the cure of souls. By this secular branch, I mean, the power with which presbyteries are vested by the legislature, in giving decrees, after proper inquiry, against the landholders,

holders, or heritors, as we more commonly term them, for the repairing, or the rebuilding, of churches, manses, and parochial schools, in the taking trial, and the admitting of schoolmasters, in the allotting of glebes, and perhaps some other things of a similar nature. That the presbytery, in these matters, does not act as an ecclesiastical court, is evident, not only from the nature of the thing, but from this further consideration, its not being in these, at least, in what relates to churches, manses and glebes, as in all other matters under the correction of its ecclesiastical superiours, the provincial synod, and the national assembly, but under the review of the highest civil judicatory in this country, the court of session.

Another kind of civil power committed to presbyteries, is the power of presenting (as some understand the law) to vacant parishes, upon the devolution of the right, by the patron's neglecting to exercise it for six months after the commencement of the vacancy. In this, however, our ecclesiastical ideas, and our political, so much interfere, that the power of issuing out a presentation, has never yet, as far as I know, been exerted by any presbytery, in the manner in which it is commonly exerted by lay-patrons, or in the manner in which it was formerly exerted by bishops in this country, in the times of epis-

curacy, or in which it is at present exerted by bishops in Ireland, as well as in the southern part of the island. Presbyteries do commonly, I think, on such occasions, consult the parish, and regulate their conduct in the same manner as though patronages were not in force by law. I should, perhaps, add to the aforesaid list of particulars not properly ecclesiastical, the concern which the pastor must take along with the heritors and elders of the parish, in the management and disposal of the public charities, also the power of church judicatories in appointing contributions for pious uses, to be made throughout the churches within their jurisdiction.

The conduct of a minister in regard to the few cases, which, in strictness, are without the sphere of his spiritual vocation, is, it must be owned, extremely delicate; and not the less so that in some of the particulars enumerated, as in what regards manse and glebes, he will naturally be considered as a party, from the similarity of situation in which they are all placed, in the very cause in which he must act as a judge. Whether it is a real advantage to us to possess this kind of secular authority, is a question foreign to my present purpose. For my own part, I am strongly inclined to think, that if the legislature had made proper provision for supplying parishes and ministers with sufficient churches  
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and manses, by means of the civil magistrate only, it had not been the worse for us. As, on the one hand, we should have been freed from temptations to partiality, which will, no doubt, sometimes influence our judgment as well as that of other men, so, on the other hand, we should have been freed from the suspicion and reproach of it, from which the strictest regard to equity and right will not always be sufficient to protect us. And in a character, on the purity whereof so much depends, I must say, it is of no small consequence, not only that it be unbiassed by any partial regards, but even that it be beyond the remotest suspicion of such a bias.

In England, the natural limits have been very ill preserved, and both kinds of jurisdiction, the civil and the religious, are made strangely to encroach on one another. I do not here so much allude to the judicial power of the consistorial courts, in matters matrimonial and testamentary, though these are purely secular, as to the confusion in what regards the executive part of jurisdiction. As, with them, church censures are followed with civil penalties, the loss of liberty, or imprisonment, and the forfeiture of the privileges of a citizen, the clergy must have become absolute lords of the persons and properties of the people, had there not been lodged in the civil judicatories a paramount jurisdiction,

by which the sentences of the spiritual courts can be revised, suspended, and annulled.

Add to this, that the participation of one of the sacraments having been with them, by a very short-sighted policy, perverted into a test for civil offices, a minister may be compelled, by the magistrate, to admit a man who is well known to be a most improper person, an atheist, blasphemer, or profligate. The tendency of this prostitution plainly is, by the law of the land, to make void the institution of Jesus Christ, as far as regards its meaning and design. By the appointment of Jesus Christ, the participation was to serve in the participants purely as a testimony of their faith in him, and love to him, "Do this in remembrance of me." By the law of the land, it is rendered a qualification, or test, absolutely necessary for the attainment of certain lucrative offices, and for securing a continuance in them when attained; so that, in a great number, it can serve as a testimony of nothing but of their secular views. And to render this testimony, if possible, perfectly unequivocal, such people must have a certificate from the minister of their receiving the sacrament, to present to their superiours when required. For my own part, I do not see how the divine commandment, in what regards its spirit, power, and use, could be more effectually abrogated by statute than

than by thus retaining the form, the letter, the body of the precept, and, at the same time, totally altering the purpose, object, and intention.

Men have been very long in discovering, and even yet seem scarcely to have discovered, that true religion is of too delicate a nature to be compelled, if I may so express myself, by the coarse implements of human authority and worldly sanctions. Let the law of the land restrain vice and injustice of every kind, as ruinous to the peace and order of society, for this is its proper province; but let it not tamper with religion, by attempting to enforce its exercises and duties. These, unless they be free-will offerings, are nothing; they are worse. By such an unnatural alliance, and ill-judged aid, hypocrisy and superstition may, indeed, be greatly promoted, but genuine piety never fails to suffer.

Another consequence of the confusion of spiritual jurisdiction and secular in that church, however respectable on other accounts, (for these remarks affect not the doctrine taught, the morals inculcated, nor the form of worship practised, but only the polity and discipline) another consequence, I say, is, that ecclesiastical censures among them have now no regard, agreeably to their original destination, to purity and manners. They serve only as a political engine for the eviction of tythes, surplice fees, and the like,  
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and for the execution of other sentences in matters purely temporal. Would it have been possible to devise a more effectual method, had that been the express purpose, for rendering the clerical character odious, and the discipline contemptible? Luckily with us, in those few matters of a secular nature above specified, wherein presbyteries are, in the first instance, appointed judges, when the presbytery have given their decree, they have no part in the execution, and, indeed, no further concern in the matter. Their decision is merely declarative of right, and their power is exactly similar to that of arbitrators. The only difference is, that the former are authorized by law, the latter by the nomination of the parties: but in neither is there any coercive authority. The party in whose favour the sentence is given, applies for the intervention of the lords of session to compel the obedience of all concerned. This interposition is always granted as a thing of course, unless when the presbyterial decree is brought under the review of that court by suspension. In this case the lords may affirm, reverse, or alter, as they see cause. Then it becomes their own sentence, and is enforced in the usual manner. But no process in our church can terminate in excommunication, or in any ecclesiastical censures, but a process of scandal, by which term is commonly understood



stood some flagrant immorality. These censures our constitution does not permit us to employ, on any occasion, as expedients for either securing our property, or asserting our prerogatives and power. And as we have not the same temptations with our neighbours to abuse them, so neither does the constitution in this country permit the civil magistrate to interfere with the procedure of the ecclesiastical courts. A sufficient security is provided against the rashness or injustice of the inferiour judicatories, the presbyteries, by the right of appeal to the immediately superiour tribunal, the synod, and thence, in the last resort, to the general assembly. Besides, where no civil penalty follows the sentence of the church, as is now very properly the case with us, the church courts have this additional motive, to be cautious of employing those censures except in claimant cases, namely, that if their sentences be not supported by what I may call the verdict of the country, the general sense of the people, they will very soon, and very justly, become contemptible. And this is the true footing on which all ecclesiastical censures ought to stand. But from what has been said, it is evident, that in our establishment, sufficient care has been taken that there be no material encroachment of either side, on the natural province of the other. What I have said on this article,

article, it will be observed, militates chiefly, if not solely, against what may be called a coercive power in the ministers of religion, either direct, by seizing the persons, and distraining the goods of obnoxious people, or which, in my judgment, is still worse, an indirect coercion, by employing ecclesiastical censures as the tools for effecting the same worldly purpose. Thus much only by the way.

I return to the narrative. When the western provinces were intirely severed from the eastern, Italy, France, and Germany, making one empire, and Spain a kingdom, the principal bishops in all these four provinces, who, to a considerable share of the national riches, had this advantage also, that they were at the head of an order which engrossed almost all the little learning of the times, were commonly chosen by the prince for his counsellors. The weight which this honourable distinction gave them in temporal matters, and in affairs of state, brought an immense increase of authority to the episcopal tribunal. In less than two hundred years afterwards, they pretended an absolute and exclusive right to all criminal and civil jurisdiction over the clergy, and, in various cases, over the laity also, under pretext that, though the persons were not, the causes were, ecclesiastical. Beside those, they invented another sort of causes, which

which they denominated causes of mixed cognizance, insisting, that in them, the bishop might judge, as well as the magistrate, and that the right of prevention ought to take place in favour of that court before which the cause should first be brought. In consequence of this curious distinction, they at length, through their exquisite solicitude, and the attention of their agents and dependents, who found their account in their diligence, appropriated all such causes, leaving none of them to the secular judge. And as to those which remained still uncomprehended, under either denomination, of ecclesiastical or mixed, they came at last to be comprised under one universal rule, which they most assiduously and strenuously inculcated as the very foundation of the faith; which was, that every cause devolved on the ecclesiastical tribunal, if the magistrate either refused, or neglected, to do justice. It was no wonder that in those days it should prove a common saying, that “except  
“ in places bordering on the infidels, a good  
“ lawyer makes a better bishop than a good  
“ divine;” for the more he was occupied in hearing causes, and in other secular functions, the less leisure he had for teaching, which fell at last to be totally disused by those of that station. Thus what at first was the bishop’s principal,

principal, I may say, his whole business, came to be regarded as no part of it.

But if the clerical claims had rested here, the state of Christendom had yet been tolerable. There still remained a remedy. Whenever the people in republics, and the princes in monarchies, should see the abuses become insupportable, they would, by their ordinances and edicts, reduce this overgrown authority of churchmen within reasonable limits, as, in former times, had been often done when judged necessary. But that encroaching spirit which first put christian states under the yoke, in a great measure succeeded at last in depriving them of the means of wrenching it from their necks. The lordly prelates having already arrogated to themselves all the pleas of clergymen, together with so many pleas of laymen, under the colour of spirituality, and having shared in almost all the rest, either by the name of mixed cognizance, or by superseding the magistrate, under the pretext, that justice had been denied, or unduly delayed, they proceeded, about the middle of the eleventh century, aided by the profound ignorance and gross superstition of the age, to broach and maintain, that this extensive power of judging in the bishop was not derived from the concession of princes, or from their connivance, or from the consent of the people, or from immemorial



morial custom, but that it was essential to the episcopal dignity, and annexed thereto by Christ. Now although the imperial laws are still extant in the codes of Theodosius and Justinian, in the capitulars of Charlemagne, and Lewis the pious, and other later princes, both oriental and occidental; though all clearly show how, when, and by whom such power was conceded; though all the histories, both ecclesiastical and civil, agree in relating the same concessions, and the usages introduced, mentioning the reasons and causes; yet so notorious a truth has not been able to surmount the single affirmation of the canonist doctors, who have, on the contrary, had the audacity to support the divine original of prelati- cal dominion. They have even boldly proclaimed those to be heretics, who pay any regard to evidence as clear as sunshine, who cannot submit entirely to renounce their understandings, and to be treated as fools, and blind.

They did not even confine themselves within these bounds, but maintained, that neither the magistrate, nor the prince himself, could, without sacrilege, intermeddle in any of those causes which the clergy had appropriated, because they are things spiritual, and of spiritual things laymen are incapable. The light of truth was not, however, so perfectly extinct, but that even in those dark times there were some learned and  
pious

pious persons who opposed this doctrine, showing that both the premises were false. The major, that laymen are incapable of spiritual things is, said they, absurd and impious, since they are, by adoption, received into the number of the sons of God, made brethren of Jesus Christ, and citizens of the New Jerusalem; since they are honoured to participate in the divine grace, in baptism, and in the communion of the body and blood of the Lord. What spiritual things are there superior to these? And if there be none, how can he, who partakes in these supreme blessings, be called absolutely incapable of spiritual things? But the minor also is false, that the causes appropriated to the episcopal tribunal are spiritual, since they are all reducible to these two classes, transgressions and contracts, which, if our judgment is to be determined by the qualities assigned to things spiritual in scripture, are as far from being such as earth is from heaven.

But it seldom fares so well with mankind, that the majority is on the side of truth and reason. So it is in regard to our present subject, that upon the spiritual power given by Christ to the church, or whole community of his disciples, of binding and loosing, that is, of excluding from, and receiving back into their communion, and upon the institution of Paul for terminating amicably

amicably their differences in matters of property by reference, without recurring to the tribunal of infidels, there has been erected, in a course of ages, and by several degrees, the principal of which have been pointed out to you, a spiritual-temporal tribunal, the most wonderful the world ever saw. In consequence of this it has happened, that in a great part of Christendom, (I speak not of protestant countries, nor of the Greek church) in the heart of every civil government, there subsists another, independent of it, a thing which no political writer could before have imagined possible. How church-power came all at last to centre in the Roman pontiff, I intend particularly to illustrate in some subsequent lectures, some of those I purpose to give on the rise and progress of the hierarchy. In the history of ecclesiastical jurisdiction I have now given, ye see the gradual usurpations of the church, or rather of the clergy, on the temporal powers; in the next, I propose to begin the sketch which I intend to lay before you, of the history of ecclesiastical polity, and trace the usurpations of part of the church upon the collective body.

I cannot conclude without acquainting you what will probably appear surprising, that, for a great part of the account now given, I am indebted to the writings of a Romish priest, Fra

Paolo Sarpi, the celebrated historian of the council of Trent, one who, in my judgment, understood more of the liberal spirit of the Gospel, and the genuine character of the christian institution, than any writer of his age. Why he chose to continue in that communion, as I judge no man, I do not take upon me to say. As little do I pretend to vindicate it. The bishop of Meaux (*Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes*, liv. 7<sup>me</sup>. ch. 110<sup>me</sup>.) calls him a protestant and a calvinist under a friar's frock. That he was no calvinist, is evident from several parts of his writings. I think it is also fairly deducible from these, that there was no protestant sect then in existence with whose doctrine his principles would have entirely coincided. A sense of this, as much as any thing, contributed, in my opinion, to make him remain in the communion to which he originally belonged. Certain it is, that as no man was more sensible of the corruptions and usurpations of that church, no man could, with greater plainness, express his sentiments concerning them. In this he acted very differently from those who, from worldly motives, are led to profess what they do not believe. Such, the more effectually to disguise their hypocrisy, are commonly the loudest in expressing their admiration of a system which they secretly despise. This was not the manner of

Fra



Fra Paolo. The freedoms, indeed, which he used, would have brought him early to feel the weight of the church's resentment, had he not been protected by the state of Venice, of which he was a most useful citizen. At last, however, he fell a sacrifice to the enemies which his inviolable regard to truth, in his conversation and writings, had procured him. He was privately assassinated by a friar, an emissary of the holy see. He wrote, in Italian, his native language; but his works are translated into Latin, and into several European tongues. His History of the Council of Trent, and his Treatise on ecclesiastical Benefices, are both capital performances. One knows not, in reading them, whether to admire most the erudition and the penetration, or the noble freedom of spirit every where displayed in those works. All these qualities have, besides, the advantage of coming recommended to the reader, by the greatest accuracy of composition and perspicuity of diction. This tribute I could not avoid paying to the memory of an author, to whom the republic of letters is so much indebted, and for whom I have the highest regard.

## LECTURE IV.

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IN my last lecture, I attempted a brief detail of the principal causes, which contributed to the rise and progress of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In doing this, I had occasion to show how, from regulations originally the wisest and the best imaginable, there sprang, through the corruptions that ensued, one of the grossest usurpations, and one of the greatest evils that have infested the christian church. This we are well entitled to call it, if what has proved the instrument of avarice, ambition, contention, and revenge, as well as the source of tyranny and oppression, can justly be so denominated. Ye know that the rise and progress of that form of government, into which the church, by degrees, came at last to be moulded, and which has been termed the ecclesiastical polity, and the hierarchy, is to be the subject of the present, and of some subsequent lectures. The former regarded only the jurisdiction of churchmen, the bishops in particular, in civil matters: the present subject is the internal polity of the church, and the form

form she has insensibly assumed, with the rules of subordination which have obtained, and, in many places, do still obtain, in the different orders. The one refers properly to the secular power of ecclesiastics, the other to the spiritual. The two discussions are nearly related, and have generally a joint connection with the same events, operating either as causes, or as instruments. However, in treating that which I have just now mentioned as the theme of this discourse, I shall avoid repetition as much as possible, and shall not recur to what has been observed already, unless when it appears necessary in point of perspicuity, for the more perfect understanding of the argument.

Permit me to premise in general, that the question so much agitated, not only between protestants and papists, but also between sects of protestants, in regard to the original form of government established by the apostles in the church, though not a trivial question, is by no means of that consequence which some warm disputants, misled by party prejudices, and that intemperate zeal, into which a struggle long maintained commonly betrays the antagonists on both sides, would affect to make it. It is said proverbially by the apostle, as holding alike of every thing external and circumstantial; “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink,

“ but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the  
“ Holy Ghost. For he that in these things  
“ serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and ap-  
“ proved of men.” To me nothing is more  
evident, than that the essence of christianity,  
abstractly considered, consists in the system of  
doctrines and duties revealed by our Lord Jesus  
Christ, and that the essence of the christian  
character consists in the belief of the one, and  
the obedience of the other. “ Believe in the  
“ Lord Jesus Christ,” says the apostle, “ and  
“ thou shalt be saved.” Again, speaking of  
Christ, he says, “ being made perfect, he be-  
“ came the author of eternal salvation to all  
“ them that obey him.” The terms rendered  
sometimes believing, and sometimes obeying, are  
commonly of so extensive signification as to in-  
clude both senses, and are therefore used inter-  
changeably. Now nothing can be conceived  
more absurd in itself, or more contradictory to  
the declarations of Scripture, than to say that  
a man’s belief, and obedience of the Gospel,  
however genuine the one, and however sincere  
the other, are of no significancy, unless he has  
received his information of the Gospel, or been  
initiated into the church by a proper minister.  
This is placing the essence of religion not in any  
thing interior and spiritual, not in what Christ  
and his apostles placed it, something personal in  
regard



regard to the disciple, and what is emphatically styled in scripture, *the hidden man of the heart*; but in an exterior circumstance, a circumstance which in regard to him is merely accidental, a circumstance of which it may be impossible for him to be apprized. Yet into this absurdity those manifestly run, who make the truth of God's promises depend on circumstantials, in point of order no where referred to, or mentioned in these promises; nay, I may say with justice, no where, either explicitly declared, or implicitly suggested, in all the book of God.

Not but that a certain external model of government must have been originally adopted for the more effectual preservation of the evangelical institution in its native purity, and for the careful transmission of it to after ages. Not but that a presumptuous encroachment on what is evidently so instituted, is justly reprehensible in those who are properly chargeable with such encroachment, as is indeed any violation of order, and more especially when the violation tends to wound charity, and to promote division and strife. But the reprehension can affect those only who are conscious of the guilt; for the fault of another will never frustrate to me the divine promise given by the Messiah, the great interpreter of the father, the faithful and true witness to all indiscriminately, without any limi-

tation, that “ he who receiveth his testimony  
“ hath everlasting life.” I may be deceived in  
regard to the pretensions of a minister, who may  
be the usurper of a character to which he has no  
right. I am no antiquary, and may not have  
either the knowledge or the capacity necessary  
for tracing the faint outlines of ancient establish-  
ments, and forms of government, for entering  
into dark and critical questions about the import  
of names and titles, or for examining the authen-  
ticity of endless genealogies ; but I may have all  
the evidence that consciousness can give, that I  
thankfully receive the testimony of Christ, whom  
I believe, and love, and serve. If I cannot know  
this, the declarations of the gospel are given me  
to no purpose : its promises are no better than  
riddles, and a rule of life is a dream. But if I  
may be conscious of this, and if the christian  
religion be a revelation from heaven, I may have  
all the security which the veracity of God can  
give me, that I shall obtain eternal life.

“ No,” interposes a late writer \*, “ Cannot  
“ God justly oblige men, in order to obtain the  
“ benefits which it is his good pleasure to be-  
“ stow, to employ the means which his good  
“ pleasure hath instituted ? It pleased not him  
“ to cleanse Naaman the Syrian from his leprosy

\* Dodwell Parænesis, 34.

“ by the water of any other river than the Jordan ; insomuch, that had Naaman used the rivers of Syria for this purpose, he would have had no title to expect a cure.” Certainly none, Mr. Dodwell. But could any thing be more explicit than the oracle of God pronounced by the prophet? “ Wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean.” Naaman did not, and could not misunderstand it. Whereas, had the prophet said barely, “ Wash seven times, and thou shalt be clean ;” and had the Syrian then washed seven times in Abana or Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, and remained uncured, would he have had reason to regard Elisha as a true prophet? Could he have formed from this transaction the conclusion which he did so justly form in favour of the God of Israel? Yet such an expression of the promise, wherein an essential article of the condition is suppressed, would be necessary to make the case parallel to the present. *He who believeth and is baptized*, saith our Lord, *shall be saved*. You qualify his promise with the additional clause, “ if he be baptized by a minister who has himself received baptism and ordination in such a particular manner.” But where do you find this qualification specified? Scripture is silent. The spirit of God hath not given us the remotest hint of it ; would it not then be wiser in you to follow the

the advice which Solomon hath given by the same spirit? *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* The terms of the gospel-covenant are no where, in the sacred pages, connected with, or made to depend on, either the minister, or the form of the ministry, as Naaman's cure manifestly was on his washing in one particular river. But so strange is the inconsistency of which human nature is susceptible! No person can be more explicit than this man, in admitting that there is nothing in scripture from which we can infer that any particular form of polity was, for every age and country, appointed in the church. A passage to this purpose I shall soon give you in his own words. Nay more, that very episcopacy, for which he so strenuously contended, making the existence of christianity depend upon its reception, is, by his own account, not only destitute of scriptural warrant, but is not properly of apostolical origin, not having been instituted till after the death of the apostles, in the sixth or seventh year of the second century: for even John, who lived the longest, is not said to have reached that period. Arrogant and vain man! what are you, who so boldly and avowedly presume to foist into God's covenant articles of your own devising, neither expressed nor implied in his words? Do you venture, a worm of the earth? Can



you think yourself warranted to stint what God hath not stinted, and following the dictates of your contracted spirit, enviously to limit the bounty of the universal parent, that you may confine to a party, what Christ hath freely published for the benefit of all? Is your eye evil, because he is good? Shall I then believe, that God, like deceitful man, speaketh equivocally and with mental reservations? Shall I take his declaration in the extent wherein he hath expressly given it; or, as you, for your own malignant purpose, have new-vamped and corrected it? “Let God be true, and every man a liar.” But as for you, who would thus pervert the plainest declarations of the oracles of truth, and instead of representing Christ as the author of a divine and spiritual religion, as the great benefactor of human kind, exhibit him as the head of a faction, your party forsooth. I must say that I have stronger evidence that you have no mission, than all your traditions, and antiquities, and catalogues, will ever be able to surmount. For if “he whom God sendeth, speaketh the words of God,” (and this is a test which Christ himself hath given us) he who contradicteth God’s words is not sent by him. This is alike the language of scripture, and the language of common sense. Your’s is neither.

In

In regard to the outward order, however important it be, it affects not the essence of religion in the least; and even our adversaries themselves, being judges, is not represented in scripture as affecting it. The garments which a man wears, or the house in which he lodges, however necessary for his accommodation and comfortable subsistence, are not as his limbs and members, and still less as the powers and faculties of his mind, a part of his person. Now in this respect there appears a very close analogy. For though in our present situation, clothes and dwelling are requisite for protecting us against the inclemencies of the weather, and other external accidents, we may, nevertheless, have both clothes and dwelling of different forms, yet equally commodious. Nay, one form may be more convenient in certain climates, and certain situations, which is less convenient in other climates, and other situations. The same thing may with equal truth be affirmed concerning the form of church-government. This is evidently true also of civil government. Of whatever mode it be, absolute or limited, monarchical or republican, unless it degenerate into tyranny, it is entitled to the obedience of the subjects. For "the powers that be," *οἱ ὅντες ἐξουσίαι*, "are ordained of God." No criterion is mentioned but established possession. Now I can see no reason why a church may not subsist  

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under

under different forms as well as a state; and though it must be owned, that one form may be more favourable than another to the spirit and design of the constitution, we cannot always judge with safety from the first of these how much it has retained of the last. Nay, I must acknowledge, that for any thing I could ever discover in the sacred oracles to the contrary, the external order may properly undergo such alterations, as the ends of edification in different exigencies may require, and prudence may direct. The only thing of real importance is, that nothing be admitted which can, in any way, subvert the fundamental maxims, or infringe the spiritual nature of the government.

Thus much in general is conformable to the doctrine both of the church of England, and of the church of Scotland. For how different soever these churches are in the plans of government they have adopted, and how much soever each of them is attached to its own, they equally avoid limiting the christian ministry to one particular model. The former, in her 23d article, intitled, *Of ministring in the Congregation*, says expressly, “Those we ought to judge lawfully  
“ called and sent, which be chosen and called to  
“ this work by men, who have public authority  
“ given unto them in the congregation, to call  
“ and send ministers into the Lord’s vineyard.”

This,

This, if it mean any thing, and be not a mere identical proposition, of which, I own, it has some appearance, refers us ultimately to that authority, however modelled, which satisfies the people, and is settled among them. Again, in the Westminster confession of faith, which is of equal authority with us, as the 39 articles are of in England, chap. xxv, entitled, *Of the church*, sect. 3. “Unto the catholic visible church  
“Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and  
“ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of  
“the world.” And this is all that is said on the subject. Neither has presumed to delineate the essentials of a christian ministry, or to say any thing which could be construed to exclude those who are governed in a different manner from that in which they themselves are governed. So much moderation has on this article been shewn by both churches. I shall add to these the doctrine of the episcopal reformed church of Scotland, contained in a confession of faith ratified by law in this country in 1567; which, though set aside in the time of the civil wars, to make room for the Westminster confession, was re-enacted after the restoration, and continued in force till the abolition of prelacy at the revolution. I recur to it the rather, in order to shew how much, on this article, the sentiments of our late nonjurors  
(for



(for we have none of that description at present) differ from the sentiments of those whom they considered as their ecclesiastical predecessors, and from whom they derived their spiritual pedigree.

In article 19, entitled, *Of the notes of the true kirk*, (I use the words of that formulary) it is affirmed, “ They are neither antiquity, title  
“ usurped, *lineal descence*, place appointed, nor  
“ multitude of men approving an error.” Again, article 23, *Of the right administration of the sacraments* :—“ That sacraments be rightly  
“ ministrate, we judge two things requisite : the  
“ one, that they be ministrate by lawful minis-  
“ ters, whom we affirm to be only they that are  
“ appointed to the preaching of the word, they  
“ being men lawfully chosen thereto by some  
“ kirk, &c. We fly the doctrine of the papis-  
“ tical kirk in participation of their sacraments :  
“ 1st. Because their ministers are no ministers  
“ of Christ Jesus, &c.” Here not only is lineal descent expressly excluded, but its very channel is removed, as the popish clergy are declared (I think with too little ceremony and too universally) to be no ministers of Christ. Nay, all that appears externally necessary, according to them, to constitute a minister, is the choice of some congregation. Far from believing one particular form of ecclesiastic polity to be sacred and  
invio-

inviolable, they say, article 21, *Of general councils*, &c. “ Not that we think that any policy  
 “ and any order of ceremonies can be appointed  
 “ for all ages, times, and places.”

It will be owned, likewise, by those who on this subject are capable of examining with coolness, and pronouncing with impartiality, that we have not that sort of information in holy writ, from which we can with certainty form a judgment concerning the intire model of the apostolic church. What we can learn thence on this subject, we must collect from scattered hints given as it weré incidentally, when nothing seemed less the intention of the writers, than to convey to us a particular account of the plan of the society they had formed. It is a just observation of a writer of the last century, and deserves the attention of disputants on both sides:—  
 “ Videmus apostolos in scriptis suis magis sollicitos fuisse de ministrorum *virtutibus* quam  
 “ *gradibus*, et pluribus inculcasse et descripsisse  
 “ eorum mores, quales illo statu digni essent et  
 “ loco, quam quidem de forma regiminis disceptasse.” [Hoornebeck de episcopatu.] But who can be more express on the silence of scripture, in regard to this article of church government, than that zealous defender of prelacy, Mr. Dodwell, in a passage which I but just now promised to give you in his own words. They  
 are

are these\* :—“ Est sane admodum precaria  
 “ omnis illa argumentatio, qua colligitur discip-  
 “ linæ *ecclesiasticæ* in posterum recipiendæ rā-  
 “ tionem omnem *e scripturis* N. Fœderis esse  
 “ hauriendam. *Nullus* enim est qui id profite-  
 “ atur aperte sacri scriptoris *locus*. Et ne qui-  
 “ dem *ullus* qui ita de *regimine* agat *ecclesiastico*  
 “ quasi id voluisset scriptor, aut scriptoris auctor  
 “ *Spiritus Sanctus*, ut formam aliquam unam  
 “ *regiminis* ubique et in omne ævum duraturi  
 “ describeret. Nusquam scriptores *sacri* satis  
 “ expresse tradiderunt, quanta secuta fuerit in  
 “ *regimine* ecclesiarum mutatio cum primum  
 “ discederent *a synagogarum* communione *eccle-*  
 “ *sie*. Nusquam satis aperte, quantum *donis*  
 “ concessum fuerit *Spiritus S. personalibus*,  
 “ quantum vicissim *locis* et *officiis*. Nusquam  
 “ *officiarios extraordinarios* qui illo ipso *seculo*  
 “ finem habituri essent ab *ordinariis* satis accu-  
 “ rate secernunt qui nullo unquam seculo essent,  
 “ dum iterum veniret Christus, in desuetudinem  
 “ abituri. Imo sic omnia *tum*-passim *nota* ipsi  
 “ quoque *nota* supponunt, nec ipsi posterorum  
 “ causa explicant, quasi eum duntaxat, qui *tum*  
 “ obtinuerit, statum in animo haberent. *Officia*  
 “ ipsa nusquam *qualia* fuerint, aut quam late pa-  
 “ tuerint, ex professo describunt, quod tamen

\* Parænesis, N. 14.

“ sane faciendum erat si formam prescripsissent  
“ *perpetuo duraturam.*” To this I shall only  
subjoin, If the case be as you, Mr. Dodwell, have,  
in my opinion, in the passage above quoted, fairly  
represented it ; if all the reasoning be quite pre-  
carious from which men conclude, that the whole  
model of ecclesiastical discipline may be extracted  
from the writings of the New Testament ; if  
there be no passage of any sacred writer which  
openly professes this design ; if there be not one  
which so treats of ecclesiastical government, as  
if the writer, or the writer’s author, the Holy  
Spirit, had intended to describe any one form of  
polity, as being to remain every where, and for  
ever inviolate ; if the sacred penmen have no  
where declared, with sufficient clearness, how  
great a change must take place in church govern-  
ment, when the churches should first withdraw  
from the communion of the synagogues ; if they  
no where clearly enough shew how much was  
allowed to the personal gifts of the Holy Ghost,  
and how much also to places and offices ; if  
they no where, with sufficient accuracy, distin-  
guish the extraordinary officers who were not to  
outlive that age, from the ordinary who were not  
to cease till the second coming of Christ ; nay,  
if all the things then generally known, they  
also suppose known, and never, for the sake of  
posterity, explain, minding only the state wherein  
things



things were at the time; if they no where professedly describe the ministries themselves, so as to explain either their nature, or their extent: which was surely indispensable, if they meant to settle a model in perpetuity; in brief, if the case was really as that gentleman affirms it to have been, (for what is here put by me hypothetically, is positively averred by him in terms the most express) what can we conclude, but that nothing was farther from the view of the inspired writers, than to prescribe any rule to us on the subject, or to give us any information which could lead us to imagine, that a particular form of polity was necessary, or even more acceptable to God than another? What can we conclude, but that it was intended by the Holy Spirit thus to teach us to distinguish between what is essential to the christian religion, the principles to be believed, and the duties to be practised, and which are therefore perpetual and unchangeable; and what is comparatively circumstantial, regarding external order and discipline, which, as matters of expedience, alter with circumstances, and are therefore left to the adjustment of human prudence? What can better account for the difference remarked by Hoornbeck, that the apostles were more solicitous about the virtues than the degrees of the ministers, and more strenuous in inculcating the manners to be observed by them

as suitable to their office, and conducing to their usefulness, than copious in describing the form of their government? The one is essential, the other only circumstantial; the one invariable, the other not.

But what shall we say of a doctrine which, like this of the episcopal polity, was never alleged to belong to the religion of nature, and is now discovered, by one of its warmest advocates, to have no better title to be accounted a principle of revelation, not having been instituted by Christ, or his apostles, or even in their time? No mention is made of it in scripture, the canon of which was finished, before this novelty appeared upon the earth; nor is any appointment given in holy writ by anticipation concerning it. Whence then have we either the institution, or the doctrine of its necessity? I know not what answer Dodwell could give to this, except the following. From frequent study, profound researches into antiquity and critical investigations concerning doubtful idioms, we have made the discovery. These exertations, I acknowledge, have their use, and are sometimes subservient to the cause of religious verity; chiefly indeed for illustrating its evidences, or repelling objections, but never for teaching its fundamental principles or essential duties. These, like the prophet's vision, are written in characters so legible and plain,

plain, that “ *he may run who readeth them.*” No scope for Herculean labour, bodily or mental. “ *Say not, Who shall ascend into heaven?*” No need for scaling the firmament, diving into the abyss, or crossing the ocean. “ *The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart.*” That system must convey a strange idea of revelation, which exhibits it as, in respect of the truths necessary to be known by all, perfectly mute to the unlearned, and of service only to linguists, critics, and antiquaries. How different is the notion conveyed by Christ, the founder and the finisher of the faith! “ *I adore thee, O Father, lord of heaven and earth, because having hidden these things from sages and the learned, thou hast revealed them to babes.*” It was to instruct and save the ignorant and the sinful that Jesus Christ came into the world. And, in consequence of this divine purpose, nothing recommended wretches to his charitable attention more than their needs. Besides, if the scriptures contain a revelation from God, and consequently be true, we must admit them to be perfect, and to want nothing essential to the information of christians in faith and practice: for this is what they affirm concerning themselves. “ *They are able to make men wise unto salvation: for all scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in*

*righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*

But in this a true Dodwellian can never consistently acquiesce, who maintains a certain ecclesiastical polity to be essential, concerning which he at the same time admits, that scripture has given us neither information nor command. This necessarily forces us into the dilemma of affirming, either that the doctrine of Dodwell is not only false but pernicious, in subverting the authority of scripture; or that scripture is both false and self-contradictory, in asserting the perfection of its own doctrine, whilst it has withholden all intelligence upon one article; without the observance of which, all the other instructions it gives are vain, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins. And who is the revealer of this article, this mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations? If the revelation itself be of importance, it is but just to acknowledge, that the world is indebted for it, more to Mr. Henry Dodwell, than to all the apostles and evangelists of our Lord, or even to all the sacred penmen of either Old or New Testament put together.

But as it is not every one's province or humour to trace nonsense through all its dark and devious windings, I shall desist from expatiating further on the absurdity of making that a doctrine of  
the



the gospel with which the New Testament does not acquaint us, or a christian institution which did not commence till after the decease of the last of the apostles ; and shall only further observe, that the defect of scriptural evidence, so frankly acknowledged on the other side, will be allowed by any person of understanding to be an irrefragable argument, that the polity or model of government was not judged by the apostles to be of so great consequence, as that it should of necessity be either fixed or perfectly known. Whereas it must have been of the last consequence, if the very existence of a church, and the efficacy of God's word and ordinances, totally depended on it.

But that there was no such dependance, as is supposed, on any thing in the form of the ministry, is manifest also from this, that in the directions given to christians, as to the judgments they ought to make of those who may assume the character of teachers in divine things, the people are never directed to an examination of, what I may call, the ostensible source of the authority of those teachers, but solely to the consideration of their character and conduct, and of the doctrine which they teach. “ Beware  
“ of false prophets,” said our Lord, “ who come  
“ to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they  
“ are ravening wolves.” But how shall we be-

ware of them, or by what criterion shall we distinguish the false from the true? Shall we critically examine their spiritual pedigree, and see whether, by an uninterrupted succession of regular baptisms and ordinations, they be lineally descended from thy apostles? Impossible. A method this which would involve every thing in impenetrable darkness, and plunge all the hopes and prospects of the christian into a scepticism, from which there could be no recovery. On the contrary, the test he gives is plain and familiar. Mark his words:—"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." And the apostle John says, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." And how are we to try them? The sequel plainly shews, that it is by the coincidence of their doctrine with that of the gospel. The like was also the method prescribed under the former dispensation by the prophet. "To the law and to the testimony," says he, "if they speak not according

“ cording to this word, it is because there is no  
 “ light in them.” A very different mode of  
 trial would now be assigned by a zealous patro-  
 nizer of the hierarchy, popish or protestant.

There is a memorable incident, and intirely  
 apposite to the point in hand, which is recorded  
 by two of the evangelists, Mark and Luke.  
 John said to Jesus, “ Master, we saw one cast-  
 “ ing out devils in thy name, and we forbade  
 “ him, because he followeth not us.” Jesus an-  
 swered, “ Forbid him not; for there is no man  
 “ who shall do a miracle in my name, that can  
 “ lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not  
 “ against us is for us.” The apostles still re-  
 tained too much of the Jewish spirit, not to con-  
 sider more the party than the cause. “ He fol-  
 “ loweth not us,”—a reason which to this day,  
 alas! would be thought the best reason in the  
 world by most christian sects, and by every indi-  
 vidual who possesses the spirit of the sectary.  
 From Christ’s testimony we have ground to be-  
 lieve, that what this man did, was done with an  
 intention truly pious; not to make dissention,  
 or form a party against the disciples, but to pro-  
 mote the common cause. And what was so done,  
 would probably be productive of the great end  
 of the christian ministry, the conversion of the  
 hearers to the faith, love, and obedience of the  
 Messiah.

But

But even where so much cannot be said of the goodness of the intentions, we are not warranted to decide against the utility or success. The apostle Paul observes, that whilst some preach Christ of love, others do it of envy, and strife, and contention. This, I imagine, is the scriptural, I say not the ecclesiastical, notion of schismatical teachers. For that alone is schism in the sense of holy writ, which wounds charity, and which, in order to unite christians more closely to a sect or faction, alienates their hearts from one another, and consequently from the interest of their common master; or which detaches them, in respect of love, even though outward unity should not be violated, from the whole community of christians, in order to attach them more firmly to a part. The former only, those who preach out of love, the apostle regards as true; the latter, those who preach out of envy and strife, he considers as pretended preachers, or heralds of Christ. Yet he adds:—  
“What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice.”  
Would he have said so, think ye, if a defect, either in the mission, or in the disposition of the minister, could have rendered their ministrations ineffectual to the hearers? In those days of the church’s infancy, when the far greater part of the world



world was Jews and Pagans, such teachers as the apostle speaks of, though bad men themselves and uncommissioned, might have been instrumental in converting infidels and idolators to the faith of Christ. But there had been no subject of joy here, if the conversion of such, however sincere, and their participation in the ordinances of religion, however piously intended by the participants, had been, according to the doctrine of our antagonists, rendered ineffective by the defects of the instrument. The very success of the preaching of such unauthorized pretenders would, in that case, have been a fitter subject of grief to the apostle, than of joy, as the unhappy proselytes might, by an apparent conversion to Christ, have been lulled into a security much more fatal than the unbelief in which they were before. His joy, on the contrary, was a demonstration of his sentiments, that the people might receive spiritual benefit, whatever exceptions there might be to the ministry. I own the case is, in many respects, worse with the modern authors of division, the founders of new sects, in countries where christianity is universally professed, and where there is free access by the scripture, both to its doctrines, and to its precepts. It is hard to conceive to what the disciples of some recent sectaries can be made proselytes, unless to uncharitableness, hatred and calumny  
against

against their fellow-christians, and that on the most frivolous or unintelligible pretexts. For neither idolatrous worship, nor the exaction of unlawful terms of communion, are so much as pretended. If, according to our Lord's criterion, we are to know the tree by the fruits, the evil fruits above-mentioned, the invariable effects of such divisions will be thought more analogous to the nature of briars and thorns, than to the fruit of the fig-tree, or of the vine. However, even of such contentious teachers I would not presume to say, that they may not occasionally do good, though there be but too great reason to dread that the evil preponderates. And even here I am to be understood as speaking of the first authors of such unchristian separations. I know too well the power of education, and of early prejudice, to impute equal malignity to those who may succeed them, whether teachers or disciples. But to return:—

To assign to the Messiah, or rather, under that colour, to procure for themselves a worldly kingdom, was not an error peculiar to the Jews. The same evil principle, which in them proved the cause of the rejection of the true Messiah, proved quickly among the Gentiles, who acknowledged him, the source of the grossest corruption and perversion of his institution. After it became the aim of church rulers to secularize the  
kingdom

kingdom of Christ: they uniformly had it for their object, in exact conformity to the example the Pharisees had given them, to remove the attention of men from things spiritual and essential, to things corporal and circumstantial. And in this, as in all other corruptions, they have but too well succeeded. The more effectually to answer this purpose, they have not scrupled to introduce such dogmas, (of which that I have been examining in this lecture is an example) as tend to subvert the spirit of the gospel, and are inconsistent with the veracity of God.—

Of a very different character and tendency are some sentiments I have lately met with concerning the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, in the Sermons of Mr. Comings, prebendary of St. Patrick's, Dublin, now deceased. They convey an idea of the church truly rational, enlarged, and sublime; such as strongly distinguishes it from all the pitiful and contracted pales, so uncharitably erected by the different sectaries of all known denominations, popish and protestant, established and unestablished: for it is not a legal establishment, as some vainly imagine, or any thing merely external, that either makes or unmakes a sectary in the scriptural sense: it is solely the spirit by which a man is actuated. But without any further comment, I shall leave this author to speak for himself, by giving you  
his

his own words. In my judgment, he unfolds his conceptions on this subject with uncommon energy. It may not however be improper to premise, that the words in the gospel, to which the preacher specially refers, are these: (Luke xvii. 15, 19.) *One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at Jesus feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole.* “ Thus  
“ you see, though the Jews learnt no humility,  
“ no gratitude, yet the *Samaritan*, ignorant as  
“ he was *then* thought, misinformed as he is  
“ *now* reckoned; yet the *Samaritan* was deeply  
“ impressed with *both*. The Almighty himself  
“ taught him, and he was obedient to the divine  
“ instructor. The pride of religion would make  
“ the Jews brand him with the factious name of  
“ heretic or schismatic; but were he heretic or  
“ schismatic, he offered to heaven as grateful a  
“ sacrifice as was ever laid on the altar at Jeru-  
“ salem by prophet, or by saint. The conten-  
“ tions about the forms of religion destroy its  
“ essence. Authorized by the example of Jesus  
“ Christ, we will send men to the *Samaritan* to  
“ find



“ find out how to worship. Though your church  
“ was pure, without spot or imperfection, yet if  
“ your heart is not turned to God, the worship  
“ is hateful, and the prayers are an abomination.  
“ The homage of the darkest pagan worshipping  
“ he knows not what, but still worshipping the  
“ unknown power that formed him, if he bows  
“ with humility, if he praises with gratitude, his  
“ homage will ascend grateful to heaven: while  
“ the dead careless formality of prayer, offered  
“ up in the proudest christian temples, shall be  
“ rejected as an offering unholy. For think you  
“ that the Almighty esteems names and sects?  
“ No: it is the heart that he requires; it is the  
“ heart alone that he accepts. And much con-  
“ solation does this afford to the contemplative  
“ mind of man. We may be very ignorant in  
“ spiritual matters, if that ignorance cannot be  
“ removed, and yet may be very safe. We may  
“ not know in what words to clothe our desires  
“ in prayer, or where to find language worthy of  
“ being presented to the majesty of heaven. But  
“ amidst the clouds that surround us, here is  
“ our comfort: in every nation, he that worship-  
“ peth with humility, worshipping aright; he  
“ that praiseth with gratitude, praiseth well.  
“ The pride of establishments may despise him,  
“ but the wisdom and the righteousness of hea-  
“ ven will hear, and will approve him. It was

“ to

“ to the humble thankful Samaritan, though  
“ separated from the true church ; yet it was to  
“ him alone, because he alone returned to glorify  
“ God, that Jesus Christ said, *Arise, go thy*  
“ *way, thy faith hath made thee whole.* Thus,  
“ in a moment, vanished and became of no  
“ effect, the temple of the Jews, built by pro-  
“ phetic direction : its ritual given by their illu-  
“ minated legislator : all gave way to the pro-  
“ found humility, and the sublime gratitude, of  
“ what they called an unbeliever, of what Jesus  
“ Christ called the only faithful servant of God  
“ among them.” Permit me only to subjoin,  
to the above quotation, what is particularly ap-  
posite to the subject now in hand. Let us but  
reflect who were at that time the sacred minis-  
ters, the teachers and the priests of the Samari-  
tans ? In the very beginning of their defection,  
in the revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam,  
the sacred historian acquaints us, that this idol-  
atrous king cast out the priests of the Lord, and  
made priests of the lowest of the people, who  
were not of the family of Aaron, or of the sons  
of Levi. And of the same character they still  
remained. No order of men, existing at present  
in the christian church, can give any evidence  
of a divine right compared with that of the tribe  
of Levi, and of the posterity of Aaron in the  
Jewish. Yet this passage, in relation to the  
humble

humble, the pious, and the thankful Samaritan, may show us effectually, if we be capable of being taught, that, under no dispensation of things whatsoever, can the validity of God's covenant be made to depend on the ministry, or his promises be rendered ineffectual to the humble believer, and grateful worshipper, on account of any defect in the priesthood. We see that such defects were no obstruction to the efficacy of the humble Samaritan's faith, or the acceptance of his person. *Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole.*

Thus much I thought proper to premise, in regard both to the nature and to the consequence of the question about the government instituted by the apostles in the church. I next proceed to the examination of the fact. And in this it is my purpose to proceed with all the candour and impartiality of which I am capable; and to speak out boldly what appears to me most probably to have been the case, without considering what sect or party it may either offend or gratify. I am sensible that, in historical inquiries of this kind, it becomes us to be modest, since we must know, that persons, both judicious and candid, have mistaken; for, on all the questions that arise from the subject, there have undoubtedly been men of this character on the opposite sides. It is comparatively of little moment, whether we

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approve most the monarchical, the aristocratical, or the democratical form of church government, or to which of the three we have thought it our duty to subject ourselves. The only error that is here of consequence, is, when people are led to consider this as a ground of disunion, or, which is still worse, of alienation of affection from those who, though differing in this particular, have received the like precious faith with themselves; when they think themselves warranted by this difference in unchurching their brethren, as the phrase is, that is, in pronouncing them to have no concern, no portion in the commonwealth of Christ. This I take to be indeed a fundamental error, as it strikes at the root of that charity which is the end of the commandment, and the bond of perfectness; and consequently, without which, whatever be our boasted attainments in faith, in knowledge, or in clerical degrees, we are, in all that concerns the vitals of religion, absolutely nothing. It was to guard you all against an extreme of this kind, that I have been so particular in the discussion of this preliminary point.

Now as to the form of the church first instituted by Christ and his apostles, let it be observed, that there were at that time especially two objects which seemed equally to claim attention. The one was the conversion of the world to the Messiah, the other was not only the preservation



ſervation of the converts that ſhould be made; but the ſecuring of a continuance of the faith in their families. Theſe two, though they concur in the ultimate end they are fitted to answer, the glory of God in the ſalvation of men, are very different in themſelves, and require very different instruments and meaſures. To take a ſimilitude from temporal things, it is one thing to conquer a kingdom, and become maſter of it, and another thing to govern it when conquered, ſo as to retain the poſſeſſion which has been acquired. The ſame agents, and the ſame expedients, are not properly adapted to both. For the firſt of theſe purpoſes, there was a ſet of extraordinary miniſters or officers in the church, who, like the military forces intended for conquest, could not be fixed to a particular ſpot, whiſt there remained any provinces to conquer. Their charge was in a manner univerſal, and their functions ambulatory. For the ſecond, there was a ſet of ordinary miniſters or paſtors correſponding to civil governors, to whom it was neceſſary to allot diſtinct charges or precincts, to which their ſervices were chiefly to be confined, in order to inſtruct the people, to preſide in the public worſhip and religious ordinances, and to give them the neceſſary aſſiſtance for the regulation of their conduct. Without this ſecond arrangement, the acquiſitions made could not have been long re-

tained. There must have ensued an universal relapse into idolatry and infidelity. This distinction of ministers into extraordinary and ordinary has been admitted by controvertists on both sides, and therefore cannot justly be considered as introduced (which sometimes happens to distinctions) to serve an hypothesis. The great patron of prelacy avows the difference, in a quotation lately given from his *Parænesis*, at the same time that he complains that the sacred writers have not been explicit in assigning the boundaries of either: an oversight which I own I think would have been unpardonable in them, if they had believed the knowledge of this article so indispensable as Mr. Dodwell did.

Of the first kind, or extraordinary ministers, were the apostles, prophets, and evangelists. These at least were the chief. For, from some passages in Paul's writings, it appears very probable, that all those who were endowed, in an eminent degree, with any of the *χαρισματα*, or supernatural gifts, were considered as a sort of extraordinary ministers. Compare 1 Cor. xii, 28, &c. with Eph. iv, 11, &c. But it is not with that extraordinary and temporary arrangement, supported by the power of working miracles, which was calculated chiefly for the founding of the church, that we are here concerned. It is with the ordinary and permanent establish-

ment,

ment, to the suitable discharge of the duties of which, it is not the *χαρισματα*, but the *χαριτες*, not the miraculous and shining gifts of the spirit, but the less conspicuous, though more important, graces of knowledge, faith, and charity, which are requisite.

In regard to these, it is from the acts of the apostles and the epistles, that we principally derive our information. Thence we learn, that the apostles regularly established churches, and settled therein proper ministers in every city and village, where they had made as many proselytes as might form a congregation. I do not say that the settlement of pastors, and other officers, took place immediately, on the conversion of the people, but on the first convenient occasion afterwards. The converts every where seem, for some time, to have been instructed chiefly by such of their number as were endowed with supernatural gifts; those called prophets in particular, who also had the principal part in conducting the public offices of religion. Of these mention is made in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts. This was the footing on which the apostles commonly left the places they travelled to, on their first visit. It was not till afterwards, either by messengers sent on purpose, or on a second or third visit, that they gave them fixed teachers. It has been said, that in the extraordinary and un-

settled state of the church, the sacred offices were not so much appropriated to the ministers, as to exclude private christians from occasionally exercising them, especially in the absence of the former. The first order given to the eleven *to make converts* (for such is the import of μαθητευσαί) *to baptize and to teach*, carries in it nothing from which we can discover, that it was a commission entrusted to them exclusively as apostles or ministers, and not given them also as christians; and that the apostles were particularized, because best qualified, from their long attendance on Christ's ministry, for promoting his religion in the world; but not with a view to exclude any christians, who were capable, from co-operating with them in the same good cause. That this last was the construction then put upon that charge, appears not improbable, from the subsequent part of the scripture history. Philip, though no apostle, and probably at that time no more than a deacon, (that is, a trustee for the poor in matters purely secular) did all to the Ethiopian eunuch, which the apostles had in charge with regard to all nations. He converted, baptized, and taught him. No reasonable man can doubt that any private christian was then, and is still, warranted if he can, to convert an infidel, and to teach him the principles of christianity. Yet these are two important parts of  
the



the apostolical commission. If I should say the most important parts, I should not speak without warrant. Our Lord himself made proselytes, and instructed them, but baptized none, leaving this merely ministerial work to his disciples. Peter was sent to open the door of faith to the Gentiles; by the conversion of Cornelius and his family. But the charge of baptizing them he trusted intirely to the christian brethren who attended him. Ananias, a disciple, was employed to baptize Paul. And Paul says himself of his own mission, that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, denoting thereby, according to the import of the Hebrew idiom, that baptizing compared with preaching, though a part, was but an inferiour and subordinate part of his charge. Nothing here advanced can justly be understood to combat the propriety of limiting, for the sake of discipline, the power of baptizing to fewer hands than that of preaching, when once a fixed ministry is settled in a church, and regulations are adopted for its government.

The doctrine I have been illustrating, so far from being, as some romanists ignorantly pretend, one of the many novelties sprung from the protestant schism, was openly maintained at Rome without censure, about the middle of the fourth century, by Hilary, a deacon of that church, a man of erudition and discernment, of whom I

shall have occasion to speak afterwards. This commentator, in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians iv, 11, 12, has these words: “ Postquam omnibus locis ecclesiæ sunt constitutæ, et officia ordinata, aliter composita res est, quam cœperat; primum enim omnes docebant, et omnes baptizabant, quibuscunque diebus, vel temporibus fuisset occasio.” A little after, “ Neque Petrus diaconos habuit quando Cornelium cum omni domo ejus baptizavit; nec ipse, sed jussit fratribus qui cum illo ierant ad Cornelium ab Joppæ.” Again: “ Ut ergo cresceret plebs, et multiplicaretur, omnibus inter initia concessum est et evangelizare, et baptizare, et scripturas in ecclesia explanare.” Such were the sentiments of a respectable member of the Roman presbytery in those days; for conclave, both in name and thing, was as little known at Rome then as it is with us at present. Now though the gradual settlement of a regular ministry throughout the church, would gradually abolish an usage of this kind, it is natural to conclude, that wherever there happened to be a return of the like exigencies, through want of licensed pastors, every private christian would not only be entitled, but bound, if capable, to supply the defect. So thought the christians, who were dispersed on the persecution mentioned Acts viii. For “ they  
“ that

“ that were scattered abroad,” the historian makes no distinction, “ went every where, “ preaching the word.” Now the apostles remained in Jerusalem, and ordinary pastors were not yet appointed. This is agreeable to what appears to have been the general opinion, and even the practice where circumstances required, as far down as Tertullian’s time, about the beginning of the third century. This author, the first of the Latin fathers, in his *Exhortatio ad castitatem*, wherein he inveighs against second marriages, having urged that Paul made it necessary in a bishop that he be the husband of one wife, introduces an antagonist replying, that the prohibition to pastors implies a permission to others to marry oftener. He answers, that the distinction among christians, between the priesthood and the people, who, by the evangelical law, are all priests, is of the church’s making, that is, as I understand him, is not of divine original ; referring to what appears to have been the approved practice of laymen even then, who, when none of the clerical order could be had, celebrated the eucharist, and baptized, and served as priests to themselves. “ Three persons,” says he, “ though laymen, make a church.” “ *Ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est consessus, et offers, et tinguis, et sacerdos es tibi solus. Sed ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici.*” It matters nothing

thing to the present question, that his doctrine of the unlawfulness of second marriages is unreasonable; it matters nothing, that his argument is inconclusive; we are concerned only with the fact, to which he refers as notorious.

Hardly could any attentive reader, who is a stranger to the disputes that in latter ages have arisen about holy orders, think the passage susceptible of any other meaning than that I have given it, and which indeed Rigaltius, a romanist, and Grotius, a protestant, had given before me. I know the pains which has been taken by some learned men, who cannot conceive a kingdom of Christ, that is not a kingdom of priests, totally to disguise this passage. The French jesuit Petavius admits, indeed, according to the obvious meaning of the words, that Tertullian argues from the known practice in the case specified; and as the Romish church acknowledges the validity of lay-baptism, he admits also, that *tinguis* means, you baptize; but adhering sacredly to the principles of his party, does not admit that *offers* can be interpreted, you *consecrate* the eucharist. The Irish nonjuror Dodwell, of whose system lay-baptism and lay-consecration are equally subversive, not only admits, but proves, that unless *offers* refer to the priestly office, as well as *tinguis*, there can be no meaning in the argument. At the same time he affirms, that  
this



this author does not argue from a known practice, but from his own opinion of the rights of laymen in such emergencies, explaining *offers et tinguis, you have a right to celebrate the eucharist, and to baptize*. The impartial inquirer, who has no hypothesis to serve, will readily agree with Dodwell, that the only interpretation of *offerre*, as connected with *tinguere*, is to celebrate the eucharist; and no less readily agree with Petavius, that the only natural import of the present of the indicative here used, is, you do, and not, *you have, in my judgment, a title to do*. The argument drawn from an allowed and known custom, in support of his opinion, was confessedly of some weight, but an argument in support of his opinion, drawn from another opinion of his equally questionable, and, as Dodwell thinks, contradicted by the universal practice of the age, was of no conceivable weight, and could not have been adduced by any person of common understanding. Tertullian, like Dodwell, held some extravagant tenets, but was incapable of arguing so ridiculously as this critic would represent him. That laws, declarative of right, are sometimes expressed in the present of the indicative, is true, but never when the common practice is in contradiction to the law. Dodwell's quotations from the apostolical constitutions are so far from answering his purpose, that

that they are a confirmation of what was just now observed. They are not more declarative of the canons than of the customs which then obtained. If the prevailing practice had been repugnant to those canons, no writer of common sense, who did not intend to deceive, would have expressed himself in that manner. The words which conclude the argument, *Igitur si habes jus sacerdotis, &c.* show no more than that the author inferred the right from the practice. Is there any incoherence in saying, *In an urgent case, when no priest can be found, you baptize, you give the eucharist, and you alone serve as priest to yourself. If, then, you have the right of priesthood in yourself in a case of necessity, you ought to have the discipline of a priest, wherever it may be necessary to exercise the right.* This is literally Tertullian's argument.

But to return from this digression to those fixed officers or ministers, whom the apostles assigned to the churches which they planted; beside some general names used promiscuously in Scripture, such as ἡγούμενοι, διδασκαλοι, ὑπηρέται, λειτουργοι, guides, teachers, ministers, officers, and perhaps a few others, there are three terms more frequently applied to them, which are, ἐπισκοποι, πρεσβύτεροι, διακονοι, bishops or overseers, presbyters or elders, and deacons or attendants. Now the doubts that have arisen are chiefly concern-  
ing

ing the two first of these names, ἐπισκοποι and πρεσβυτεροι; and the question is, whether they are names for the same office, or for different offices. This, at least, is the first question; for it must be owned, that there have been some strenuous advocates for the apostolical origin of episcopacy, who have intirely given up the argument founded on the names. As to the last title of the three, διακονοι, it is allowed on all hands, that it is the name of a different office, though commentators are not intirely agreed as to the nature and extent of that office.

That the terms ἐπισκοπος and πρεσβυτερος, are sometimes used promiscuously in the New Testament, there is no critic of any name who now pretends to dispute. The passage, Acts xx, is well known. Paul, we are told, v. 17, “from  
 “ Miletus sent to Ephesus, and called the elders  
 “ of the church” τας πρεσβυτερας τῆς ἐκκλησιας. In the speech he made to them, when they were reconvened, he has these words, v. 28: “Take heed,  
 “ therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock  
 “ over which the Holy Ghost hath made you  
 “ overseers,” ἐπισκοπους, bishops, is the term in the Greek. Here there can be no question that the same persons are denominated presbyters and bishops. Pretty similar to this is a passage in the epistle to Titus, ch. i. The apostle says, ver. 5, “For this cause left I thee in Crete,  
 “ that

“ that thou shouldst set in order the things that  
 “ are wanting, and ordain elders, *πρεσβυτερος*, in  
 “ every city.” Ver. 6, “ If any be blameless,”  
 &c. Ver. 7, “ For a bishop must be blame-  
 “ less,” *επισκοπον*. Here, unless we will say that  
 the apostle argues very incoherently, he must  
 mean the same thing by *elder*, at the fifth verse,  
 and *bishop*, at the seventh. In like manner the  
 apostle Peter : 1 Peter v. 1. “ The elders, *πρεσ-*  
*βυτερος*, which are among you, I exhort,” &c.  
 Ver. 2, “ Feed the flock of God which is among  
 “ you, taking the oversight thereof,” *επισκο-*  
*πηεις*, discharging the office of bishops. The  
 truth is, the word *επισκοπος* was properly the  
 name of office, and *πρεσβυτερος* was a title of re-  
 spect, borrowed from the Jewish custom, (which  
 was, indeed, analogous to that of other nations)  
 of calling not only the members of the sanhe-  
 drim *πρεσβυτεροι*, elders or senators, but also the  
 members of the city councils.

To all this, indeed, the common answer is,  
 that most of the names of offices are, in scrip-  
 tural language, not so uniformly appropriated to  
 the particular offices, as not occasionally to be  
 applied to others, agreeably to the etymological  
 import of the words. Thus the term *διακονος* is  
 applied to the apostles themselves. John calls  
 himself *πρεσβυτερος*, elder ; so also does Peter ;  
 and Christ is styled eminently both apostle and  
 bishop.



bishop. To the same purpose it is urged, that sometimes in the Old Testament the *high priest* is called simply the priest. It would, however, be much more to the point, if a passage could be named wherein an ordinary *priest* is styled *high priest*. The superior order, it is universally admitted, includes the inferior, but this does not hold conversely. Now, in the first passage above quoted from the Acts, it is manifest, that the ordinary pastors of Ephesus are styled bishops; for in no period of episcopacy, according to the present acceptation of the word, was there a plurality of bishops in one city and church. It is indeed affirmed, that in one passage, 2 Cor. viii, 23, the term *apostle* is applied to those who were of a lower order than the apostles properly so called. It is, however, observable, that the expression there used, is *αποστολοι εκκλησιων*, apostles, or messengers of the churches, not apostles of Jesus Christ, or apostles simply, without any addition, which are the common expressions used for those who were selected to be the principal promulgators of the faith. And it shows, that Theodoret, who lived several hundred years after, was very much puzzled where to find the origin of the office of bishop, as the word in his time implied, when he imagined he discovered it in a phrase which occurs but once in the New Testament, and of which

which the application is extremely doubtful. But the short, though full reply, to the aforesaid answer, is this: It is not denied, that those terms urged by the objectors, are, on certain occasions, used with greater latitude than in the ordinary application. Nevertheless, the ordinary and peculiar application is supported by so many clear passages of sacred writ, as to be rendered quite indubitable. On the contrary, one single passage from the apostolical writings has not yet been produced, in which it appears from the context, that the two terms *πρεσβυτερος* and *επισκοπος* mean different offices.

Nay, we can say more than this, which may be called a negative and presumptive proof only, that there is the strongest positive evidence which the nature of the thing can admit, that in those writings the two terms uniformly mean the same office. The apostle Paul, in the directions he gave to Timothy, about the proper supply of churches with suitable ministers, takes particular notice of two orders, and no more. One of them he calls bishops, and the other deacons. Now if by bishops he meant what in modern style is so denominated, those who have the charge of many presbyters, it is astonishing that he should not think it of importance to give any directions about the qualifications of presbyters, who had the immediate inspection

spection of the flock ; at the same time that he is very particular in regard to the qualifications of deacons, though their order has ever been allowed to be much inferiour to the other. And if (as even some friends of episcopacy have admitted) he here means by bishops only presbyters ; that an office of so great importance as the bishops, (if it was a different and superiour office) should have been intirely overlooked, is no less surprising. Further, in support of this argument, that there were but two orders then established, let it be observed, that Paul, in addressing the Philippians i, 1, expresses himself in this manner ; “ To all the saints at Philippi, “ with the bishops and deacons.” All commentators of any name, except Dr. Hammond, of whom I shall take notice afterwards, agree, that by bishops here is meant the ordinary pastors or presbyters ; for it is almost universally allowed, as I had already an occasion of hinting, that when the distinction came to be established, there was never more than one bishop in a city, or church. And as true it is also, that then there was no city which had a church, and not a bishop. Now if there was a bishop, in the modern sense, at Philippi, when the apostle wrote that letter, it looks a little strange, that he who was the chief of that christian society should be the only person that was neglected by the

apostle on that occasion. The arbitrary suppositions that have been framed, in order to elude the force of this argument, as they are without even the shadow of evidence, can merit no regard. On the other hand, it is remarkable, and may serve, if possible, to convince the most obstinate of the futility of those suppositions, that in the epistle written by Polycarp to the same congregation, about sixty years after, we find mention only of those two orders, the presbyters and the deacons; and no more allusion made either to a vacancy in their number, or to any spiritual superiour, present or absent, than was made by Paul in his letter to them so long before. Now whether we call their pastors *bishops*, with the apostle, or *presbyters*, with Polycarp, is a matter of no consequence, as it is evident that both speak of two orders only among them, and not of three; and wherever one of these names is employed, the other is dropped, this being the surest evidence which the nature of the thing admits, that the words were synonymous.

But I observe farther, that the sacred penmen, in speaking of, or to particular churches, if the spiritual instructors and guides of the people be mentioned at all, always mention them in the plural number, which, though it may be compatible with some little difference in rank or precedency, can scarcely be thought compatible

with



with so material a difference as that of office or trust. Thus the apostle to the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. v. 12, “ We beseech you, brethren, to “ know them which labour among you, and are “ over you in the Lord, and admonish you,”

τοῖς κοπιῶντας καὶ προϊστάμενους καὶ καθεστῶτας. It is remarkable too, that the term προϊστάμενος, as every other name implying direction, or government, came afterwards to be appropriated to the bishop; with whom, according to the doctrine of high church, the whole authority over the congregation was originally lodged. The presbyters could do nothing but as they happened to be authorized or commissioned by him. The use of such terms here, in the plural, when the apostle was addressing the members of one single church, shows, that the application was very different, and that matters were then on a very different footing. In the Acts also, it appears very plain, that all the stated pastors are always considered as coming under one denomination. Thus we are told of the apostles Paul and Barnabas, Acts xiv, 23, that, when journeying together, they ordained elders, πρεσβυτέρους, in every church. This is, indeed, the common title given to the ministers settled in particular churches throughout that book. When a collection is made for the poor christians in Jerusalem, it is sent τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις : and if the pastors of any church are

sent for, that they may receive proper directions, it is τὰς πρεσβυτέρους. In the fifteenth chapter, where we have an account of the consultation held at Jerusalem, about the Mosaic ceremonies, the ordinary pastors are no less than five times, to wit, in verses 2d, 4th, 6th, 22d, and 23d, distinguished by this appellation from either the apostles, or private christians, or both. Nor do we find a single hint in the whole book of any thing like different classes of πρεσβυτεροι. The name επισκοποι occurs there but once, which is in the place above quoted, where it is applied to the same individuals, who, in the same chapter, are termed πρεσβυτεροι.

In regard to the imposition of hands, which is considered by many as a necessary attendant on ordination, we find this also, 1 Tim. iv, 14, attributed to the presbytery. The word πρεσβυτεριον, though it occurs sometimes in the New Testament as applied to the Jewish sanhedrim, or council of elders, is found only in the passage now quoted, applied to a christian council. The sense of the word πρεσβυτερος, as well as the application of the word πρεσβυτεριον, in other places, to a convention of those called πρεσβυτεροι, determines the sense of the word in this passage. And, indeed, all christian antiquity concurs in affixing this name to what may be called the consistory of a particular church, or the college of its pastors.

It must be remarked by every person who gives due attention to the apostolical writings, that the custom then, if not uniformly, was, with very few exceptions, to give a plurality of teachers to every church. The state of the christian community at that time, which consisted almost entirely of new converts, men and women, who had been habituated to principles and practices very different from those they were to be instructed in, beside the more imminent dangers to which all christians, but especially the pastors, were then exposed, rendered this precaution absolutely necessary. They had, by this means, a probable ground to expect, that if some of the teachers should fall a sacrifice to the malice of their enemies, some would escape their fury, and that in every church a timely opportunity might thus be found of supplying their vacancies, so that the congregations should never be intirely destitute of pastors.

To what has been adduced from sacred writ, I shall add two very ancient testimonies: one of them is from the most respectable remains we have of christian antiquity next to the inspired writings. The piece I allude to, is the first epistle of Clemens Romanus to the Corinthians, as it is commonly styled, but as it styles itself, the epistle of the church of God at Rome to the church of God at Corinth. It is the same Clement whom Paul (Philip. iv, 3,) calls his fellow-

labourer, and one of those whose names are in the book of life. There we are told, chap. xlii; that “the apostles having preached the Gospel “in countries and towns, constituted the first “fruits of their ministry, whom they approved “by the spirit, bishops and deacons of those “who should believe.” And in order to satisfy us, that he did not use these words in a vague manner for church-officers in general, but as expressive of all the distinct orders that were established by them in the church, he adds; “Nor was this a new device, inasmuch as “bishops and deacons had been pointed out “many ages before; for thus says the Scrip-  
 + ture, “*I will constitute their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith.*” The passage quoted is the last clause of the 17th verse of the 60th chapter of Isaiah. It is thus rendered in our version: “I will make thine officers “peace, and thine exactors righteousness.” Whether this venerable ancient has given a just translation, or made a proper application of this prediction, is not the point in question. It is enough that it evinces what his notion was of the established ministers then in the church; And if (as no critic ever questioned, and as his own argument necessarily requires) he means the same by bishops with those who, in the Acts, are called *επισβυλερος*, whom the apostles Paul and Barnabas



Barnabas ordained in every church, and whom Clement, in other parts of this epistle, also calls *πρεσβυτεροι*, namely, the ordinary teachers, it would seem strange, that the bishop, properly so called, the principal officer of all, should be the only one in his account, of whom the Holy Spirit, in sacred writ, had given no previous intimation. Nay, do not the words of this father manifestly imply, that any other office in the church than the two he had mentioned, might be justly styled a *new device* or invention? Dr. Pearson, in his *Vindiciæ Ignatianæ*, insists much, that whenever any of the fathers purposely enumerate the different orders in the church, they mention always three. If the above account given by Clement is not to be considered as an enumeration, I know not what to call it. If two were actually all the orders then in the church, could he have introduced the mention of them, by telling us he was about to give a list, or catalogue, or even to make an enumeration of the ecclesiastical degrees? Is this a way of prefacing the mention of so small a number as two? It is this writer's express design to acquaint us what the apostles did for accommodating the several churches they planted, in pastors and assistants. And can we suppose he would have omitted the chief point of all, namely, that they supplied every church with a

prelate, ruler, or head, if any one had really been entitled to this distinction?

If it should be urged, that under the term *ἐπισκοποι* both functions of bishop and presbyter are comprehended, it is manifest, that, as it was the writer's scope to mark the different offices established, as being predicted by the prophets in the Old Testament, there cannot be a stronger indication, that there was then no material, if any difference, between them, and that they were properly denominated and considered as one office. The appellatives also by which they are denoted, are invariably employed by him in the plural number, as being equally applicable to all. It is said in chap. i, *τοῖς ἡγούμενοις ὑμῶν ὑποτάσσomenoi*, submitting to your governours or guides. It is remarkable also, that the word *ἡγούμενος*, here used in the plural of all their pastors, is one of those terms which came afterwards to be appropriated to the bishop. Nay, since it must be admitted, that in the New Testament, as well as in the ancient christian monument just now quoted, the words *ἐπισκοπος* and *πρεσβυτερος*, are not occasionally, but uniformly, used synonymously, the very discovery, that there was not any distinctive appellation for such an office as is now called bishop, is not of inconsiderable weight to prove, that it did not exist. We know that every other office, ordinary and extra-ordinary,

ordinary, is sufficiently distinguished by an appropriated name.

But I cannot help observing further concerning this epistle of Clement, that though it was written with the special view of conciliating the minds of the Corinthians to their pastors, commonly, in this letter, called presbyters, some of whom the people had turned out of their offices, or expelled, *απο τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς*, from their bishopric, as his words literally imply, there is not the most distant hint of any superiour to these *πρεσβύτεροι*, whose proper province it was, if there had been such a superiour, to inspect their conduct, and to judge of it; and whose authority the people had treated most contemptuously in presuming, without so much as consulting him, to degrade their presbyters. It was natural, it was even unavoidable, to take notice, in such a case, of the usurpation whereof they had been guilty upon their bishop, the chief shepherd, who had the oversight of all the under shepherds the presbyters, as well as of the people, and to whom alone, if there had been such a person, whose presbyters were accountable for their conduct. Yet there is not so much as a syllable in all this long letter that points this way. On the contrary, he argues from the power with which those presbyters themselves were vested, and of which they could not be justly stripped, whilst they

they discharged faithfully the duties of their office. I will appeal to any candid person who is tolerably conversant in christian antiquities, whether he thinks it possible, that in the third century, such a letter, on such an emergency, could have been written to any christian congregation, by any man in his senses, wherein there was no more notice taken of the bishop, who was then, in a manner, every thing in his own church, than if he were nothing at all. And that there was so great a difference, in less than two centuries, in people's style and sentiments on this article, is an uncontrovertible proof, that in that period things came to stand on a very different foot. This epistle of Clement, who was a disciple of Paul, appears, indeed, from one passage, to have been written so early as before the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, and, consequently, before the seventy second year of Christ, according to the vulgar computation. And if so, it was written before the Apocalypse, and, perhaps, some other parts of the sacred canon. Nothing, therefore, that is not Scripture, can be of greater authority in determining a point of fact, as is the question about the constitution of the apostolical church.

+ The other testimony I shall produce is that of Polycarp, who had been a disciple of the apostle John, and must certainly have written his epistle

to



to the Philippians a considerable time before the middle of the second century. He also takes notice only of two orders of ministers in the church, enjoining the people, chap. v, to be subject to their presbyters and deacons, as to God and Christ. He could go no higher for a similitude; nor could he decently have gone so high, had he known of a higher order in the church. Not a syllable of the bishop, who, in less than a hundred and fifty years after, would have been the principal, if not the only person, to whom their subjection would have been enjoined by any christian writer. Let it be observed further, that, though, in chap. v, he lays down the duties and qualifications of deacons, and, in chap. vi, those of presbyters, wherein every thing befitting judges and governors is included, and, through the whole epistle, those of the people, there is no mention of what is proper in the character and conduct of a bishop. +

I shall remark here, by the way, that there is one very antient author, Ignatius, who also comes within the denomination of the apostolic fathers, whose writings are supposed to have intervened between those of Clement and those of Polycarp, and whose authority is strongly urged on the opposite side. Of him I shall have occasion to take notice afterwards. I shall here only add, in regard to Polycarp, that what has been

now

now observed, of his epistle to the Philippians, is a full confutation of that hasty assertion of Dodwell\*, that the christian writers, posterior to Ignatius, most accurately observe even the distinction of the names; to wit, of bishop and presbyter, of which he had been speaking. His words are, "*Juniores autem Ignatio scriptores christiani et nominum distinctionem observant accuratissimani.*" It is evident from the above quotation, that Polycarp knew of no christian minister superiour to the presbyters. If the bishop was of a different order, and yet included in the term, he has been as little observant of accuracy in the distinction of the names, as of propriety and decency in his injunctions on this head.

But there are other topics from which the episcopate has, by its warmest patrons, been supported, and which it will be proper to examine particularly in the following lectures. I shall in these also endeavour to trace (as far as at this distance of time it is practicable) the outline of the apostolic church, and inquire into the origin and progress of subordination in the pastors. It will be observed by the judicious and the candid, that what has been advanced does not affect the lawfulness, or even, in certain

\* Paræn. 27.

circumstances, the expediency of the episcopal model; it only exposes the arrogance of pretending to a *jus divinum*. I am satisfied that no form of polity can plead such an exclusive charter as that phrase, in its present acceptation, is understood to imply. The claim is clearly the offspring of sectarian bigotry and ignorance. In regard to those politics which obtain at present in the different christian sects, I own ingenuously that I have not found one of all that I have examined which can be said perfectly to coincide with the model of the apostolic church. Some, indeed, are nearer, and some are more remote; but this we may say with freedom, that if a particular form of polity had been essential to the church, it had been laid down in another manner in the sacred books. The very hypothesis is, in my opinion, repugnant to the spiritual nature of the evangelical economy. It savours grossly of the conceit with which the Jews were intoxicated of the Messiah's secular kingdom, a conceit with which many like-minded christians are intoxicated still.

## LECTURE V.

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**AFTER** some considerations on the nature and consequence of the question about the polity, originally established in the church, I discussed in the former lecture the principal topics relating to the equality of the pastors, at least in point of function and official duties. I observed also, in the conclusion of that discourse, that there were other topics from which those who maintain a subordination among them, have endeavoured to defend their sentiments. Many, indeed, convinced by such arguments as were then adduced, that it is in vain to search for the office of bishop, as the word is understood by moderns, in those ministers ordained by the apostles in the churches which they founded, have referred us for its origin to the apostolate itself. I have passingly observed already, that this was one of those extraordinary offices, which were in their nature temporary, and did not admit succession. But this point, as so much stress is laid upon it, will deserve to be examined more particularly.

The



The apostles may be considered in a twofold view, either in their general character as the first pastors of the church and teachers of the christian faith, or in what is implied in their special character, of apostles of Jesus Christ. In the first general view they are, doubtless, the predecessors of all those who, to the end of the world, shall preach the same gospel, and administer the same sacraments, by whatever name we distinguish them, bishops, priests, or deacons, overseers, elders, or ministers. But the question still recurs, Whether agreeably to the primitive institution, their successors, in respect of the more common character of teachers and directors of the churches, should be divided into three orders, or only into two? To presume without evidence, that the first, and not the second, was the fact, is merely what logicians call a *petitio principii*, taking that for granted, which is the very point in debate. But if it be alleged, that not in the general character of teachers, but in their special function as apostles, the bishops are their proper successors, the presbyters and deacons being only the successors of those who were, in the beginning, ordained by the apostles, this point will require a separate discussion. And for this purpose your attention is entreated to the following remarks.

First, the indispensable requisites in an apostle sufficiently demonstrate, that the office could be but temporary. It was necessary that he should be one who had seen Jesus Christ in the flesh, after his resurrection. Accordingly they were all specially destined to serve as eye-witnesses to the world of this great event, the hinge on which the truth of christianity depended. The character of apostle is briefly described by Peter, who was himself the first of the apostolical college, as one ordained to be a witness of Christ's resurrection: Acts i, 22, a circumstance of which he often makes mention in his speeches both to the rulers and to the people. See Acts ii, 32; iii, 15; v, 32; x, 41; xiii, 31. And if so, the office, from its nature and design, could not have an existence after the extinction of that generation.

Secondly, the apostles were distinguished by prerogatives which did not descend to any after them. Of this kind was, first, their receiving their mission immediately from the Lord Jesus Christ, not mediately through any human ordination or appointment: of this kind also was, secondly, the power of conferring, by imposition of hands, the miraculous gifts of the spirit on whomsoever they would; and, thirdly, the knowledge they had, by inspiration, of the whole doctrine of Christ. It was for this reason they  
were

were commanded to wait the fulfilment of the promise which their Master had given them, that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost. What pains does not Paul take to show, that the above mentioned marks of an apostle belonged to him as well as to any of them? That he had seen Christ after his resurrection, and was consequently qualified as an eye-witness to attest that memorable event, he observes, 1 Cor. ix; 1; xv, 8: that his commission came directly from Jesus Christ and God the Father, without the intervention of any human creature, he acquaints us, Gal. i, 1; ii, 6. To his conferring miraculous powers as the signs of an apostle, he alludes, 2 Cor. xii, 12; and that he received the knowledge of the Gospel not from any other apostle, but by immediate inspiration, Gal. i, 11, &c.

Thirdly, their mission was of quite a different kind from that of any ordinary pastor. It was to propagate the Gospel throughout the world, both among Jews and Pagans, and not to take the charge of a particular flock. The terms of their commission are, "Go and teach all nations." Again; "Go ye into all the world; and preach the Gospel to every creature." No doubt they may be styled bishops or overseers, but in a sense very different from that in which it is applied to the inspector over the inhabitants of a particular district. They were

universal bishops; the whole church, or rather, the whole earth was their charge, and they were all colleagues one of another. Or to give the same sentiment, in the words of Chrysostom, Εἰσιν ὑπο Θεῷ χειροτονηθέντες ἀποστόλοι ἀρχόντες, καὶ ἐθνη καὶ πόλεις διαφορῶς λαμβανόντες, ἀλλὰ πάντες κοινῇ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐμπιστευθέντες. “The apostles were constituted of God, rulers, not each over a separate nation or city, but all were entrusted with the world in common.” If so, to have limited themselves to any thing less, would have been disobedience to the express command they had received from their Master, to go into all nations, and to preach the Gospel to every creature. If, in the latter part of the lives of any of them, they were, through age and infirmities, confined to one place, that place would naturally fall under the immediate inspection of such. And this, if even so much as this, is all that has given rise to the tradition, (for there is nothing like historical evidence in the case) that any of them were bishops or pastors of particular churches. Nay, in some instances, it is plain, that the tradition has originated from this single circumstance, that the first pastors, in such a church, were appointed by such an apostle. Hence it has arisen, that the bishops of different churches have claimed (and, probably, with equal



equal truth) to be the successors of the same apostle.

Fourthly and lastly; as a full proof that the matter was thus universally understood, both in their own age, and in the times immediately succeeding, no one, on the death of an apostle, was ever substituted in his room, and when that original sacred college was extinct, the title became extinct with it. The election of Matthias by the apostles, in the room of Judas, is no exception, as it was previous to their entering on their charge. They knew it was their Master's intention, that twelve missionaries, from among those who had attended his ministry on the earth, should be employed as ocular witnesses to attest his resurrection, on which the divinity of his religion depended. The words of Peter, on this occasion, are an ample confirmation of all that has been said, both in regard to the end of the office, and the qualifications requisite in the person who fills it, at the same time that they afford a demonstration of the absurdity as well as arrogance of modern pretenders. “ Wherefore, of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.”

But afterwards, when the apostle James, the brother of John, was put to death by Herod, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, we find no mention made of a successor. Nor did the subsequent admission of Paul and Barnabas to the apostleship form any exception from what has been advanced ; for they came not as successors to any one, but were specially called by the Holy Spirit as apostles, particularly to the Gentiles ; and in them also were found the qualifications requisite for the testimony which, as apostles, they were to give.

It is a similar subterfuge to recur to any of the other extraordinary ministers who were at that time in the church. It holds true of them all alike, that their office was temporary, and the charge they had was universal : it extended to the whole church. Of this kind evidently was the office of evangelist, a title which, like apostle, fell with those who first enjoyed it. Such was Philip, such was Timothy, and such certainly was also Titus. The last mentioned, I own, is no where expressly called so. But from a proper attention to what we learn concerning him and Timothy, both in the Acts of the Apostles, and in Paul's epistles, we find their situations, services, and trusts, so perfectly to correspond, that we cannot hesitate a moment in affirming, that their functions were the same,  
and

and that they both served as assistants to the apostle Paul. Such also, probably, were Mark and Luke. I do not here allude to the right they acquired to this title from the gospels which they wrote, but as due to them from having assisted some of the apostles in that capacity. Luke was long the companion of Paul; Mark is said to have attended Peter. And if he was a different person from this evangelist (about which some have doubted) John, surnamed Mark, ought also to be included, who for some time attended the apostles Paul and Barnabas; and after their separation, Barnabas.

The work of an evangelist appears to have been to attend the apostles in their journeys for the promulgation of the gospel, to assist them in the office of preaching, especially in places which the gospel had not reached before. This conveys the true distinction between the Greek words κηρυσσειν and ευαγγελιζειν, from which last the name evangelist is taken. The former signifies to *preach* in general, or proclaim the reign of the Messiah; the latter, though frequently rendered in the same way, denotes, properly, to declare the good news, that is, the gospel, to those who had before known nothing of the matter. The evangelists assisted also in settling the churches, always acting under the direction

of the apostles, and bearing messages from them to those congregations which the apostles could not then personally visit, serving to supply their places in reforming abuses, and settling order. But the whole history manifestly proves, that their superintendency, in particular places, was not stationary, and for life, but occasional and ambulatory. The words of Paul to Titus clearly show thus much. “ For this cause left I thee  
“ in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the  
“ things that are wanting, and ordain elders in  
“ every city, as I appointed thee.” This is not the language of one who had assigned him this as his fixed station, but of one who had entrusted him with the execution of a special purpose, which the apostle could not then execute himself; and which, when Titus had executed, the sole intention of his presence there was accomplished. But that they remained still in their extraordinary character of evangelists, and were still under the direction of those apostles whom they assisted in that capacity, appears also from this, that Paul enjoins Timothy to make dispatch, in regard to the matters he was charged with in Asia; that he might be with him in Rome before the winter. As to Titus, he orders him to meet him at Nicopolis, in Macedonia, where he intended to pass the winter; and afterwards, he writes to  
Timothy,



Timothy, (for the second epistle to Timothy was posterior to the epistle to Titus) that Titus was gone to Dalmatia.

As to the dates or postscripts subjoined to the epistles in the common bibles, it is universally agreed, among the learned, that they are of no authority. They are not found in some of our best and most ancient manuscripts: they are not the same in all copies, and some of them are evidently false. The time in which they have been annexed, is not thought to have been earlier than the fifth century. We know how far at that time a species of vanity carried people, to trace the line of their pastors upwards, through a very dark period, to apostles and evangelists, supplying, by their guesses, the imperfections of tradition. Certain it is, that in the three first centuries, neither Timothy nor Titus is styled bishop by any writer. It also deserves to be remarked, that in the island of Crete, of which Titus is said, in the postscript of Paul's epistle to him, to have been ordained the first bishop, there were no fewer, according to the earliest accounts and catalogues extant, than eleven bishops. Hence it is that Titus has been called by some of the later fathers an archbishop; though few of the warmest friends of episcopacy pretend to give the archiepiscopal order so early a date. Yet it is not without some colour of

reason that they have named him so ; since he was appointed to ordain elders in every city, and had therefore a superintendency for the time over the whole island. Whereas it is well known, that in the earliest times of episcopacy, every city wherein there was a church, that is, wherein there were christian converts enow, had its own bishop. Now if such was the case with Titus, he enjoyed an office there in which he had no succession ; since in all the antient history of the church, after the death of the extraordinary ministers, till the rise of the metropolitical jurisdiction, which was near two centuries afterwards, the bishop of a single congregation was the highest order known in the church. But our adversaries in this question do not reflect, that by making him a metropolitan, they deprive themselves of the only plausible account that has been given on their side, why he got no directions concerning the consecration of bishops, namely, that he himself was the bishop. For being in that island, by their hypothesis archbishop, he had several suffragans of the episcopal order, in whose ordination alone he was immediately concerned. The ordaining of presbyters and deacons was properly their work, and not his. Paul, on that supposition, omitted to give him instructions on the only point in which he had a concern. This holds still more evidently in regard  
to

to Timothy, whom the same persons have made primate, or rather patriarch, of the proconsular Asia, wherein there were many bishops. What excuse will their ingenuity invent for this repeated oversight of the apostle, in mentioning only two orders instead of three? Indeed, so little can the instructions, given by Paul to Timothy and Titus, be made to quadrate with any ordinary ministry that ever obtained in the church, that we are forced to conclude with the learned Dr. Whitby, (see his preface to the epistle to Titus) that their's was extraordinary as well as temporary, and that they were not succeeded in it by any that came after them. But if we must have successors to those extraordinary missionaries, why do we not retain both their titles and their offices? And why have we not successors to them all? Why have we not still our apostles, and evangelists, and prophets, and governments, and tongues, and interpreters, and miracles, and discerners of spirits, as well as they? This would be no more than the native consequence of that principle, that we must have something corresponding and successive to offices which were then, by the wisdom of God, judged necessary for the subversion of idolatry, and the first publication of the faith.

It is of as little weight to urge, that committing the charge of ordaining presbyters and deacons

cons to those extraordinary ministers, Timothy and Titus, was an evidence that there was no such power in the presbyters or bishops, as they are also called, who had been ordained in those places before. But how does it appear, that there had been any ordained in the churches to which their charge then extended? The congregations, as was hinted already, were for some time left under the tutelage of those extraordinary ministers, the prophets and wise men who happened to be among them. The first mention that is made of the ordination, or settlement of elders in every city, is in the fourteenth chapter of the Acts, whereas many thousands had been converted to christianity in different places long before. And that some of the churches to which Paul's epistles were directed, had no fixed ministry, is evident from the tenour of the epistles themselves, particularly from those written to the Corinthians. Now the directions given to both Timothy and Titus clearly shew, that they relate to the planting of churches, by supplying, for the first time, with stated pastors, those converts who had none before. This must have been done by the extraordinary ministers, if it was ever to be done at all. But when that was once effected, no other than ordinary means; to which the pastors to be ordained were equal, were requisite for the supply of occasional vacancies,



gies, and for preserving an order once established. Accordingly, the execution of the charge which Paul gave to Timothy, whereof the planting of churches, by supplying them with pastors, was a principal part, he denominates doing the work, not of a bishop, but of an evangelist, and fulfilling that ministry. Aaron, the first high priest under the former dispensation, and after him Eleazar his son, were solemnly consecrated by Moses, who was an extraordinary minister, in as much as he was the steward and sole superintendant over the house of God. But was this ever understood to imply, that no succeeding priest, and especially no succeeding high priest, could be legally consecrated by any who was inferior in office to Moses? Had that been the case, the priesthood must have expired with that generation. Moses, in his exalted station, had no successor. And till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, it might be justly said, "There  
" arose not a prophet since in Israel, like unto  
" Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." It was necessary indeed that he should lay the foundation of the Israelitish church, but that he should raise the superstructure was not necessary. To effect this was left to meaner hands. And the priesthood, once established, was sufficient of itself for filling up the voids that might be made by death, and other accidents. And is it  
reasonable

reasonable to think, that the case, in this respect, would not be similar with the church of Christ? Hence it is evident, that all the arguments, in favour of the distinction, which are brought by Epiphanius, and others, from some passages in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, being built on a false hypothesis, must fall to the ground. They proceed upon the notion, that these were properly bishops in the modern acceptation; a notion utterly unknown to that christian antiquity, which alone deserves the name of primitive; a notion, besides, incompatible with the authentic accounts we have concerning these extraordinary ministers, who were not made bishops till about five hundred years after their death.

There is only one other plea of any consequence in favour of the apostolical antiquity of episcopacy, which I shall now examine. I have reserved it for the last, because it affords an excellent handle for inquiring into the real origin of subordination among the christian pastors. The plea I mean is taken from the epistles to the seven Asian churches in the Apocalypse, addressed to the angels of these churches severally, and in the singular number; to the angel of the church of Ephesus, and so of the rest. It appears from the first chapter of that book, that each epistle is intended for all the church or congregation mentioned in the direction or superscription.

tion. But one person, called the angel of that church, is addressed in name of the whole. This is evidently different from the uniform style both of the Acts of the apostles and of Paul's epistles. In them, as we have seen, the pastors in every church are always spoken of in the plural number. The same titles are used promiscuously of all, (except the deacons) as of persons quite co-ordinate in power and trust. Here, on the contrary, the singular number is used, and a name given which is not commonly applied to those in the ministry, ordinary or extraordinary. Angel properly denotes messenger or ambassador. It is the name usually assigned to the celestial spirits, as expressive of the relation they stand in to God. The infernal spirits are, in like manner, called the devil's angels. It is sometimes also used of men. Thus it is predicted in scripture concerning John-the baptist:—"Behold, I send  
" my angel before thee, who shall prepare thy  
" way." But what shall we say of the import of the expression in that part of the Apocalypse now referred to? Shall we, with many, consider this unusual application of a name, and the adopting of the singular number in reference to the sacred office, though but in one single book, and that a very mysterious and prophetic book, as a sufficient counterpoize to all the arguments in favour of the co-ordination of the pastors, taken

from the uniform style of the plain and historical part of scripture, which informs us of the planting of churches; and from the familiar epistles of the apostles to those churches that had been planted, or to their assistants in the ministry? I do not think, that by any just rule of interpretation we can. This would be not to borrow light from the perspicuous passages, in order to dispel the darkness of the obscure, but to confound the light of the clearest passages, by blending it with the obscurity of the darkest.

Shall we then maintain with some zealous patrons of the presbyterian model, that in the sublime and allegorical style of prophecy, a community is here personified and addressed as one man? Shall we affirm, that by the angel is meant the presbytery, which our Lord, the better to express the union that ought to subsist among the members, emphatically considers as one person? With this interpretation I am equally dissatisfied. It is indeed evident, that each of these epistles is ultimately intended for the congregation. The faults reprehended are therefore to be understood as the faults not of the minister or ministers peculiarly, but as the faults that predominated among the people, and with which both the pastors and the flock are more or less chargeable; and the warnings and admonitions, as given to them all. Accordingly, when there is a necessity of



distinguishing the conduct of some from that of others, the plural number is adopted as in chap. ii, v. 10:—"Behold, the devil shall cast some " of *you* into prison, that *ye* may be tried." See also verses 13, 23, 24, and 25. But to understand by the name *angel* another community, namely, that of the pastors, appears to me an unnatural supposition, which does violence to the text. Though we have instances, especially in precepts and denunciations, wherein a community is addressed by the singular pronouns *thou* and *thee*, I do not recollect such an use of an appellative as the application of the word *angel* here would be, on the hypothesis of those interpreters. But is there no medium? Must the angel of each church here addressed be of an order differing from that of the other ministers, and superiour to it, or must it imply their collective body? To me an intermediate opinion, which has been adopted by some critics, appears much more probable than either. My sentiment therefore is, that, as in their consistories and congregations, it would be necessary, for the sake of order, that one should preside, both in the offices of religion, and in their consultations for the common good, it is their president or chairman that is here addressed under the name of angel. A regulation of this kind all sorts of societies are led to adopt from necessity, in order to prevent confusion

confusion in conducting business; and those christian societies would also fall into it by example. They had adopted the name *πρεσβυτεριον*, presbytery or senate, from the name frequently given to the Jewish sanhedrim. The term *πρεσβυτερος*, elder or senator, they had also borrowed from the title given to the members of that council. Nothing could be more natural, than to derive from that court also the practice of conducting their affairs more decently and expeditiously by the help of a president.

Let it not be imagined that I mean to signify, that the presbytery was formed on the model of the sanhedrim, because they adopted the same name. This, far from being necessary, is not even probable. Their different uses and purposes must suggest the propriety of many differences in their structure and procedure. But on the first erection of this christian senate, or council, they could hardly fail to take as much of the form of the Jewish, as was manifestly of equal convenience in both. It still adds to the probability of this, that in the synagogue from which many of the terms used in the church in those early times were borrowed, he who presided in conducting the worship, and in directing the reading of the law, was styled the angel of the congregation.

An example they likewise had in the apostolical college itself, in which Peter appears, by the appointment of his master, to have presided; though in no other particular was he endowed with any power or privilege not conferred on the rest, who were, in respect of apostleship, his colleagues and equals. I shall not detain you with entering into the controversy that has been so much laboured between protestants and papists, and of the latter, between some more and some less papistical, in regard to the prerogatives of Peter. I think it has been made sufficiently manifest, that there was not any kind of power conferred on him, in which his fellow-apostles were not sharers with him. He is indeed made a principal foundation of the church \*; but they also are foundations †; for the house of God is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets; and on the twelve foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem were inscribed the names of the twelve apostles ‡. The power of binding and loosing, that is, of pronouncing, without danger of error, the sentence of God in either retaining or remitting sins, was indeed first conferred upon Peter §, but afterwards, as we learn in other passages, particularly from the apostle John ||, on all the eleven. Yet I think it would

\* Matt. xvi, 18.

† Eph. ii, 20.

‡ Rev. xxi, 14.

§ Mat. xvi, 19.

|| Matt. xviii, 18; John xx, 23.

be putting a forced construction on the words used by Christ, when Peter first professed his faith in him as the Messiah, and had his name changed from Simon to Cephas, or Peter, that is, Rock; to affirm, that they convey to this apostle no pre-eminence or distinction whatever. For though we are taught from scripture to consider the declarations made to Peter as being also applicable to them all, still they are to be regarded as most eminently applicable to him, to whom, in the singular number, our Lord, in the audience of the rest, addressed himself in this manner: “I say to thee,”—and “I will give to thee.” The confession which Peter made was doubtless the confession of them all. They were therefore all made partakers of the same benefits. But as Peter’s zeal had led him to be, as it were, their mouth, in making this profession to his master, Christ, after the effusion of the spirit, honoured him to be their mouth also, in first preaching this doctrine, and giving testimony for him to the Jews, and afterwards, by the special call of God, to the uncircumcised Gentiles. It is thus this apostle himself speaks of it:—

“Brethren, ye know that God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the gospel.” This is called, in another place, “opening the door of faith to the Gentiles,” and affords a natural expo-



exposition of Christ's declaration to Peter, "I give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Yet even here there is nothing peculiar given to Peter, but merely that he should be honoured to be the first. In the conversion of the Gentiles afterwards, Paul was incomparably more eminent than he.

That Peter however was considered as the president of that college, appears from several particulars. One is, he is not only always named first in the gospels, and in the Acts, but by Matthew, who was also an apostle, he is called Πρῶτος, *the first*, which I imagine is equivalent to president or chief. Πρῶτος Σίμων, —the first Simon. It is not the adverb πρῶτον, that is used here, which would have barely implied, that the historian began with his name, but the adjective or epithet πρῶτος. This is the more remarkable, that he was not first called to the apostleship, for his brother Andrew was called before him, as we learn from the gospel of John. There is hardly therefore any other sense, than that now given, that can be put upon the expression. Sometimes when the apostles are spoken of, Peter alone is named. Thus: "Tell his disciples and Peter." I acknowledge, however, that as another reason may be assigned for the distinction that is made in this passage, very little stress can be laid on it. Again:—"Peter stood up with the eleven."

“ They said to Peter and the rest of the apostles.” And of the three whom our Lord, on some occasions, distinguished from the rest, honouring them to be witnesses of his transfiguration, his raising from the dead Jairus’s daughter, and his agony in the garden, Peter is not only one, but invariably named first. Paul indeed once, in mentioning those three, arranges them otherwise, (Gal. ii, 9,) *James, Cephas, and John*. It appears, however, from this very passage, that Paul considered him as the head of the twelve. When he says the gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter, it is evident that he is particularized by way of eminence, for no person can doubt that Peter had this ministry in common with the other eleven. And in taking notice of the success of the gospel among the Jews, Peter alone is again named as the great instrument God had employed for that purpose. And in another place, he mentions his own visit to the mother church at Jerusalem, as made peculiarly to Peter, with whom he abode fifteen days. These, I acknowledge, are but slight circumstances taken severally, but taken in conjunction, they are strong enough for supporting all that I intend to build upon them. For nothing is here ascribed to him as peculiar but the presidentship, or the first place in the discharge of the functions of an apostle common to them

all. He was not among the apostles as a father among his children, of a different rank, and of a superiour order, but as an elder brother among his younger brothers, the first of the same rank and order. “ Be not ye called rabbi,” said Jesus to the twelve, some time after the honourable declaration made to Peter, “ for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; and “ call no man your father upon the earth, for “ one is your father who is in heaven.” It is perhaps unnecessary to add, that whatever was conferred on Peter was merely personal, and could descend to none after him. This indeed is an unavoidable consequence of another point, that the apostolate itself was personal, and did not admit succession, which I have proved to you in the preceding part of this discourse. As to Dodwell’s notion of the presidency of the apostle James, the son of Alphaeus, otherwise James the less, also called the Lord’s brother, and supposed to have been the first bishop of Jerusalem, and likewise of the temporary primacy, first of the church of Jerusalem, afterwards of the church of Ephesus, I have taken notice of both in another place.

Some keen controvertists on the protestant side would be apt to censure what has been now advanced in regard to the apostle Peter, as yielding too much to the Romanist. Yet in fact nothing

at all is yielded. The bishop of Rome has no more claim to be the successor of Peter, than the bishop of London has, or indeed any pastor in the church. It is but too commonly the effect, though a very bad effect, of religious controversy, that impartiality and even judgment are laid aside by both parties, and each considers it as his glory to contradict the other as much, and to recede from his sentiments as far, as possible. One is afraid of every thing that looks like concession: it is like losing ground in a battle. For when once unhappily the controversial spirit has gotten possession of a man, his object is no longer truth but victory. Against this evil I would warn you, my young friends, as much as possible. Revere truth above all things wherever ye find it. Attend coolly and candidly to the voice of reason, from what quarter soever it comes. Let not the avenues to your understanding be choaked up with prejudices and prepossessions, but be always open to conviction.

Now, though what has been advanced in regard to the apostolate should not be deemed sufficiently established, yet that one, on account either of seniority, or of superiour merit, habitually presided in the presbytery, will still remain probable, for the other reasons assigned, the obvious conveniency of the thing, the commonness of it in all sorts of councils and conventions; particularly



larly in the sanhedrim and synagogue, the only rational account that, in a consistency with other parts of sacred writ, or with any christian relics of equal antiquity, can be given of the address, in the singular number, to the pastors of the seven churches severally in the Apocalypse ; and I may add, the most plausible account which it affords of the origin of the more considerable distinction that afterwards obtained between bishop and presbyter. The whole of life shows us, that from the most trivial causes the greatest effects sometimes proceed. History in particular evinces this truth, and no sort of history more remarkably than the ecclesiastical.

It may further be observed, in support of the same doctrine, that some of the most common appellations, whereby the bishop was first distinguished, bear evident traces of this origin. He was not only called *πρωτεύων*, but *πρωεδρος*, president, chairman ; and by periphrasis the presbyters were called *οἱ ἐκ τῆ δευτέρας θρονου*, they who possessed the second seat or throne, as the bishop was *πρωτοκαθεδρος*, he who possessed the first. Thus he was in the presbytery, as the speaker in the house of commons, who is not of a superiour order to the other members of the house, but is a commoner among commoners, and is only, in consequence of that station, accounted the first among those of his own rank. The same thing

might be illustrated by the prolocutor of either house of convocation in England, or the moderator of an ecclesiastical judicatory in Scotland. Now as the president is, as it were, the mouth of the council, by which they deliver their judgment, and by which they address themselves to others, it is natural to suppose, that through the same channel, to wit, their president, they should be addressed by others. A letter therefore to the congregation might very naturally be directed to him who possessed the first place, and presided among them.

But it may be said, Is not this at most but a plausible conjecture, and not a proof? I acknowledge, indeed, that the point does not admit so positive a proof as might be wished. But in a case of this kind, the most plausible conjecture, as it is all that can be had, will be accounted sufficient by a reasonable man for determining the question. This solution appears to me the best, because it puts no undue stretch upon the words, and is perfectly compatible with that equality in power and order, which the uniform style of the Acts and the Epistles, in the promiscuous application of the same appellatives, and in the use of the plural number on such occasions, proves to have subsisted among the pastors first settled by the apostles and evangelists. This equality is, in my opinion, strongly supported. It is only the  
solution

solution now given of the difficulty, arising from the noted passage in the Apocalypse, that I admit to be conjectural. And all I plead in its favour is, that of all the conjectures I have seen on that article, it is the most likely.

It was doubtless the distinction of one pastor in every church, marked by this apostle, though not made by any who had written before him, which has led Tertullian, whose publications first appeared but about a century after the apostles, to consider him as the institutor of episcopacy. These are his words, (lib. iv, adv. Marcionem) “Ordo tamen episcoporum ad originem recensus, +  
“in Joannem stabit auctorem:” which Bingham (Christian Antiquities, b. ii, chap. 1, sect. 3,) translates thus:—“The order of bishops, “when it is traced up to its original, will be “found to have Saint John for one of its au-  
“thors.” A palpable misinterpretation of our antiquary. Tertullian says expressly, “Our in-  
“quiries into the origin of the episcopal order “terminate in John the author.” Had that father said, “Mundus ad originem recensus, in  
“Deum stabit creatorem;” would Bingham have rendered it, “The world, when it is traced  
“up to its original, will be found to have God  
“for one of its creators?” I cannot allow myself to think it. Yet the interpolation in rendering *creatorem* one of its creators, is not more fla-  
grant,

grant, than in rendering *auctorem* one of its authors. By this version he avoids showing what is extremely plain from the words, that Tertullian did not think there was any subordination in the pastors of the churches instituted by the other apostles. Else how should he refer us to John, of whom, though an eminent propagator of the faith, we have not such particular accounts as of some of his colleagues? If he had discovered any traces of such a disparity in the settling of the churches, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, or mentioned in the Epistles of Paul, it is impossible he should have referred us solely to John; of whom we have so little information, as the author. But this opinion he has evidently founded on the Apocalypse, a book mentioned by him in the same sentence. Now if he thought that that apostle gave a model to the churches established by him, which the other apostles had not given to theirs, (though in after-times it came to be universally adopted) we must conclude, at least, that he did not consider any particular external form as essential to the christian church, but as a thing intirely discretionary in the several founders. And that this was his opinion, appears at least probable from this, that he had mentioned John's paternal care of certain churches in the preceding sentence, which he therefore considered as peculiarly his. “Habe-

“mus



"*mus et Joannis alumnas ecclesias.*" To me, however, it is more likely, that John, in the direction of the epistles to the seven churches, availed himself of a distinction, which had subsisted from the beginning, but as it implied no difference in order and power, was too inconsiderable to be noticed in the history. This I think at least more credible, than that either the church was new modelled by this apostle, or that the different apostles adopted different plans.

In my next lecture, I shall make a few more observations on the constitution of the apostolic church, and on the nature and character of episcopacy, which obtained in the second and third centuries; and shall, in that and some subsequent discourses, proceed in tracing the progress of the hierarchy from the latent and inconsiderable seeds or principles whence it sprang, to the amazing height it at length arrived at,

## LECTURE VI.

THE purpose of this lecture is to make a few more observations on the constitution of the apostolic church, and on the nature of the episcopacy which obtained in the second and third centuries.

When the gospel was preached by the apostles throughout the different cities and countries into which they travelled, wherever they made as many converts as would be sufficient to form a congregation, they caused them to unite together for this purpose ; and with the first convenient opportunity, settled (as Clemens Romanus expresses it) bishops and deacons among them, for instructing them more fully, both publicly and privately, for guiding them by their counsel in every doubtful or difficult exigence, and for conducting more regularly in their assemblies the public worship and ordinances. When the disciples in any place were not numerous enough to form a congregation by themselves, they united them to that which was nearest. To the  
congre-

congregation they gave the name *ἐκκλησία*, which is commonly rendered *church*.

The deacons, who seem at first to have been chosen merely in consequence of a particular exigence, as we learn from Acts vi, 1, &c. to wit, for the inspection of the poor, and the distribution of the charitable collections, were admitted very early, probably in the time of the apostles, to an inferior part in the sacred ministry, such as attending the pastors in the discharge of the religious offices, and acting under their direction. The deaconship served in fact as a noviciate to the ministry.

The bishops or presbyters (for these terms, as we have seen, were then used synonymously) appear to have been all-perfectly co-ordinate in ministerial powers. That a certain priority or presidentship, for order's sake, and in deference either to seniority, or to distinguishable talents, was allowed to one of their number, is probable for the reasons assigned in my last discourse. That the pastors were from the beginning vested with a superintendency over the congregation purely in what concerned spiritual matters, cannot be questioned. Some of the titles that are given them in scripture, *ἡγούμενοι*, *πρωτεύοντες*, guides, governors, undoubtedly imply thus much, as do also the terms in which the duty of the people

people to their pastors is recommended ; *πειθεσθε*, *ὑπεικete*, obey, submit, which manifestly require a respectful observance on their part. For this reason I imagine, that the generality of those modern sects, which have adopted the congregational, or independent plan, as it is called, have gone to an extreme, though not the most common extreme, in bringing the pastoral authority too low.

It is however certain, that when authority of any kind is unattended with what are commonly called coercive measures, or the power of the sword, and unsupported by temporal splendour, or worldly sanctions, it is impossible to preserve it otherwise amongst an enlightened people, than by purity of character in those vested with it, and by diligence in the discharge of the duties of their station. In such cases, this is the only foundation on which the respect, obedience, and submission of others can be raised. It was therefore a pertinent advice that Paul gave to Timothy, however oddly it may appear at first :—“ Let no  
“ man despise thee.” For we may justly say, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, if a pastor is despised, he has himself to blame. All however that I purpose, by quoting the aforesaid titles and commands, is to show, that in what related to the peculiar duties of their office, a reverential



verential attention was acknowledged to be due to them, as the guides and guardians of the flock.

There were some things, however, which, from the beginning, were conducted in common by the pastors, the deacons, and the whole congregation. This appears particularly and most properly to have been the case in all matters of scandal and offence. In regard to these, it is the community, that, in strictness of speech, is offended. The very word scandal or stumbling-block implies this. It is the community, therefore, that ought to be satisfied. It is to them our Lord appears (Matth. xviii, 15, &c.) to have committed the charge of admonishing delinquents, and even of excommunicating obstinate offenders. But I shall have occasion to examine the import of that passage in the gospel afterwards. Only it may be further observed, in confirmation of what has been now advanced, that the earliest practice of the church was conformable to the interpretation now given. Clement, in the epistle above quoted, (chap. liv,) calls church censures *τα προστάσσομενα ὑπο τῶ πλῆθους*, the things commanded by the multitude, that is, the congregation.

Another point, in which they had doubtless all a share, was the election of their pastors and deacons. That the deacons were at first chosen  
by

by the people, is manifest from the account we have of their institution above referred to. Yet this point, however clear in its origin, seems very clearly to have undergone a change. In regard to the choice of pastors, the matter is not so plain. Some expressions in ancient authors seem to favour the opinion, that these also were constituted in consequence of the election of the people. Other expressions favour more the notion, that the choice was in the presbytery, who proposed the candidate they had elected to the people; and that the people had the power of rejecting, without assigning a reason, when they did not approve the choice. It is not improbable, that different methods, in this respect, obtained in different congregations. From scripture we have not sufficient ground for concluding positively on either side. Clement, in the fore-cited epistle, seems to favour the second opinion. The passage I allude to is in chap. xlv, where, speaking of the pastors, he uses this expression: "Those who were constituted by the apostles, and afterwards by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole congregation."—

συνευδοκησας τῆς ἐκκλησίας πασης.

It is not to be imagined, that among people so artless, and at the same time so-charitable, as we have reason to think the first christian societies actually were, the bounding lines of the powers  
and

and privileges of the different orders would be accurately chalked out. It is more than probable, that the people, in a perfect reliance on the knowledge, zeal, and experience of their pastors, would desire, before every thing, to know whom they, who were the fittest judges, and had the same object in view, would think proper to recommend; and that, on the other hand, the pastors, having nothing so much at heart as the edification of the people, would account their disapprobation of a candidate a sufficient reason for making another choice. It is indeed certain, as appears by the epistles of Cyprian, which were written about the middle of the third century, that for the three first ages of the church, though most matters came at last to be previously discussed in the presbytery, where some judgment was formed concerning them, no final resolution was taken in any affair of moment, without communicating it to the people, and obtaining their approbation. I signified before, that the presbytery, of which there is frequent mention in the ancient fathers, consisted not only of the presbyters, with their president, to whom the name bishop, at first common to them all, came soon to be appropriated, but also of the deacons.

It has, in modern times, been made a question, whether the presbyters, even exclusive of their president, could all come under one denomina-

tion; or whether some of them were properly pastors and teachers, and others only assistants in matters of government and discipline. Some keen advocates for presbytery, as the word is now understood, on the model of John Calvin, have imagined they discovered this distinction in these words of Paul to Timothy, (1 Tim. v, 17,)—  
 “ Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy  
 “ of double honour; especially they who labour  
 “ in the word and doctrine.” Here, say they, is a two-fold partition of the officers comprized under the same name, into those who rule, and those who labour in the word and doctrine, that is, into ruling elders and teaching elders. To this it is replied, on the other side, that the *especially* is not intended to indicate a different office, but to distinguish from others those who assiduously apply themselves to the most important as well as the most difficult part of their office, public teaching; that the distinction intended is therefore not official but personal; that it does not relate to a difference in the powers conferred, but solely to a difference in their application. It is not to the persons who have the charge, but to those who labour in it, *οἱ κοπιῶντες*. And to this exposition, as far the more natural, I intirely agree. What was affirmed before, in relation to the coincidence of the office of bishop and presbyter, from the uniform and promiscuous appli-



application of the same names and titles, may doubtless be urged, in the present case, with still greater strength. The distinction is too considerable between a pastor and a lay elder, as it is called, to be invariably confounded under one common name. When the character of such as are proper for the office of elder is pointed out by Paul to Timothy \*, apt to teach, or fit for teaching, διδακλικός, is mentioned as an essential quality; and though the words be different in the charge to Titus †, the same thing is implied, ινα δυνατός και παρακαλειν εν τη διδασκαλια τη υγιαinese και της αντιλεγοντας ελεγχειν, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. This is spoken indiscriminately of all who were proper to be nominated bishops or elders, which we cannot suppose would have been done, if part of them were to have no concern in teaching. We find no such quality among those mentioned as necessary in deacons. And a dubious, not to say a forced, exposition of a single passage of scripture, is rather too small a circumstance, whereon to found a distinction of so great consequence. If, therefore, it were only from this passage, that an argument could be brought for the admission of those denominated laymen to a share in the management

\* 1 Tim. iii, 2.

† Tit. i, 9.

of church affairs, I, for my part, should most readily acknowledge, that our warrant for the practice would be extremely questionable. But I shall have occasion to consider this afterwards.

*we began*

In the second century it is very plain, that a settled distinction, in several respects, obtained between the bishop and his colleagues in the presbytery, for as yet they may still be called colleagues. Many titles, which had before been common to them all, came at length to be appropriated to him who was considered as their head, such as *ἐπισκοπος*, *ἡγούμενος*, *προεσως*, *πρωτοκλιδος*, *πρωτοκλιδος*, *πρωτοκλιδος*, and some others. Though names are but sounds, those who are conversant in the history of mankind will readily allow, that they have greater influence on the opinions of the generality of men, than most people are aware of. Besides, it is of the nature of power, unless guarded by a watchful jealousy, (rarely to be found in unexperienced and undesigning people) to accumulate and gather strength. Distinguish one at first but by a small degree of superiority, and the distinction you have made will very soon, and as it were naturally, carry other distinctions along with it. There is something here that resembles gravitation in material things. As the quantity of matter increases, its attractive force increases, and it more easily draws other matter to itself.

Some

Some have represented it as an insuperable objection to the presbyterian hypothesis, concerning the rise of episcopal superiority, that it seems to imply so great ambition in one part, and so great supineness (not to give it a worse name) in the rest of the primitive pastors, ordained by the apostles, and by the apostolic men that came after them, as is perfectly incredible; this they seem to think a demonstration *a priori*, that the thing is impossible. Let it be observed, that I have all along admitted an original distinction, which, though very different from that which in process of time obtained, served for a foundation to the edifice. And so far am I from thinking that the ambition, or the vices, of the first ministers gave rise to their authority, that I am certain, that this effect is much more justly ascribed to their virtues. An aspiring disposition rouses jealousy—jealousy puts people on their guard. There needs no more to check ambition, whilst it remains unarmed with either wealth or power. But there is nothing which men are not ready to yield to distinguished merit; especially when matters are in that state wherein every kind of pre-eminence, instead of procuring wealth and secular advantages, exposes but to greater danger, and to greater suffering. Even the small distinction of being accounted the first in the society, and, as it were, the senior brother among

the pastors, would be a strong incitement to a faithful and zealous minister to distinguish himself, by being the first also in every difficulty, and in every danger. This would beget in the people a more implicit deference to his judgment, and respect to his person. A deference at first merely paid to virtue, comes at last, through the gradual operation of habit, to be considered as due to office. What was gratuitously conferred on the meritorious predecessor, is claimed by the undeserving successor as a right. And the very principles of our nature tend to favour the claim. But when ease and affluence succeed to danger and distress, then indeed ambition on the one side, and dependance on the other, will be able to secure what virtue alone could earn. Such is the ordinary progression of human things. Similar to this, if traced backwards, will be found the origin of almost all the governments that are not founded in conquest.

It were easy, on the same ground, with those objectors, to evince *a priori*, (if a specious declamation on a sort of general principles, which pay no regard to fact and testimony, could evince) that monarchy, or the dominion of one man over innumerable multitudes of men, who, taken severally, may be his equals, both in understanding, and in bodily strength, is, in the nature of things, impossible. But how do all such futile reasonings



ings vanish, like shadows, before the torch of history. This I observe only by the way, not that I think the steps so difficult to imagine by which this ecclesiastic power has first arisen. For example, from making their president a man of great consequence among them, the transition is easy to their making his concurrence in all measures a *conditio sine qua non*; that is to say, their considering every thing as invalid that is done against his judgment. It is but one step further, and every thing becomes valid which bears the stamp of his authority. Now if, in this manner, the president had been raised in the churches of some principal cities, these would soon become a standard to the rest. And to their first rising in such cities to this pre-eminence, analogy to the civil government (as appears both from the testimony of antiquity, and from the reason of the thing) did not a little contribute. In this judgment we can plead the concurrence of some of our keenest antagonists. “Civitatum Romanorum,” says Dodwell, “Græcarumque disciplinam in civitatem ecclesiasticam etiam administratione observatam constat e Tertulliani aliquantisper cœvo Origine. Sic enim ille illas invicem contendit, ut partes partibus etiam responderent.” Thus he who presided was considered as corresponding in ecclesiastic matters to their prefect, proconsul, or

chief magistrate, by whatever title he was distinguished, the presbytery to their senate or council, and the congregation to the comitia or convention of the people. I make no doubt, as Jerom plausibly supposes, that the acquiescence of the people would be given the more readily, from the consideration of the expediency of such an arrangement for preserving union. When one and the same congregation was under the direction of a plurality of pastors entirely equal, unless there were an umpire, to whose decision they were all considered as under an obligation to submit, there might be some danger of a rupture, in case their sentiments should jar. But we shall see in the sequel, (what is fully as unaccountable) that from causes perfectly similar, to wit, an allowed presidentship in synods and councils to the bishops of the capitals of provinces, kingdoms, regions, and of the empire itself; and from the gradual appropriation of titles, formerly common, arose insensibly the real presidency of metropolitanical, patriarchal, and even papal power.

The first ecclesiastical author who mentions bishop, presbyter, and deacon, as three distinct orders of church officers, is Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who is supposed to have written about the sixteenth year of the second century, and by some even sooner. Indeed, several of the epistles ascribed to him are now acknowledged, by critics

of

of all denominations, to be spurious, and some of the rest are admitted, even by his ablest advocates, to be interpolated; insomuch, that it would not be easy to say how we could with safety found a decision on an author, with whose works transcribers, in the judgment of both sides, have made so free. What makes his testimony the more to be suspected is, first, because the fore-mentioned distinction is so frequently and officiously obtruded on the reader, sometimes not in the most modest and becoming terms, as was the manner of the apostles, when speaking of their own authority; and obedience is enjoined to the bishop and presbyters, even where the injunction cannot be deemed either natural or pertinent, as in his epistle to Polycarp, who was himself a bishop: secondly, because the names bishop and presbyter are never used by him for expressing the same office, as they had been uniformly used by all who had preceded him, and were occasionally used by most of the ecclesiastic writers of that century: thirdly and principally, because Polycarp, a contemporary and survivor of Ignatius, in a letter to the Philippians, quoted in a former discourse, pointing out the duties of all ranks, pastors, and people, makes mention of only two orders of ministers, to wit, presbyters and deacons, in the same manner as Luke, and Paul, and Clement, had done before him; nay,  
and

and recommends to the people submission to them, and only to them, in terms which I must say were neither proper, nor even decent, if these very ministers had a superiour in the church, to whom they themselves, as well as the people, were subject. To me the difference between these two writers appears by no means as a diversity in style, but as a repugnancy in sentiment. They cannot be both made applicable to the same state of the church. So that we are forced to conclude, that in the writings of one, or the other, there must have been something spurious or interpolated. Now I have heard no argument urged against the authenticity of Polycarp's letter, equally cogent as some of the arguments employed against the authenticity of the *épistles* of Ignatius. And indeed the state of the church, in no subsequent period, can well account for such a forgery, as the epistle of the former to the Philippians; whereas, the ambition of the ecclesiastics, for which some of the following centuries were remarkable, renders it extremely easy to account for the nauseous repetition of obedience and subjection to the bishop, presbyters, and deacons, to be found in the letters of Ignatius.

The way in which Dodwell accounts for it, (though in itself not implausible) is very singular, as his sentiments are on many subjects. He says, that it was because the bishop's authority was



was at that time a perfect novelty, totally unknown in the church, that Ignatius found it necessary to exert himself to the utmost, to recommend and establish it. According to this modern, the power and all the prerogatives of bishops were a mere upstart of the second century, after the death of all the apostles, and after the complement of the canonical scriptures. It is in vain, therefore, he acknowledges, to look for any trace of episcopal authority in the New Testament. In the days of the apostles, it was not by prelacy that the church was governed, but by a species of popery, with which, if I mistake not, Mr. Dodwell was the first who brought the world acquainted. The pope was not the apostle Peter, but the apostle James: the papal throne was erected not at Rome, but at Jerusalem; and, after the destruction of this city by the Romans, transferred to Ephesus; and when finally suppressed, the episcopacy was reared upon its ruins. Yet of this episcopacy, though neither coeval with the christian religion, nor of apostolical institution, for it did not obtain till after the death of John, the last of the apostles, and of which we cannot have scriptural evidence, as it did not exist till several years after the finishing of the canon, the absolute necessity since the sixth year of the second century, and no sooner, is such, that without it there is no church of Christ, no salvation

salvation of men. Damnation or annihilation is all the prospect that remains even for those who believe and obey the gospel. For the rejection of an innovation which has no place there, and of which all the sacred writers were ignorant, can never imply either disbelief or disobedience of the gospel. But why, it may be said, detail extravagancies, more like the ravings of a disordered brain, than the sober deductions of a mind capable of reflection? I should indeed have thought the task unnecessary, if experience had not proved, that even such extravagancies have sometimes been productive of infinite mischief. If Dodwell, with all his learning, had not been a perfect idolator of his own eccentric imagination, he could not have acquiesced in a system so chimerical, so ill-compacted, so destitute of every kind of proof, external or internal, and to which all the sources of evidence, hitherto known in theological controversy, reason, scripture, and tradition, are equally repugnant. If it had been his express object to produce a scheme which might outdo even the Romish, not only in absurdity but in malignity, he could not have succeeded better. His unceasing cry was schism; yet in the scriptural sense a greater schismatic than himself the age did not produce. Whose doctrine was ever found more hostile to that fundamental principle, declared by our Lord to be  
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the criterion of our christianity, mutual love? Whose doctrine ever was more successful in planting, by means of uncharitable and self-opinioned judgments, the principle of hatred in its stead? The test to which Scripture points is, Does the teaching in question alienate the hearts of christians, or unite them? Does it conciliate the affections where differences have unhappily arisen? or does it widen the breach? If the former, the spirit is christian; if the latter, schismatical. The former is not more productive of *charity*, the end of the commandment, or gospel-covenant, and the bond of perfectness, than the latter is of its opposite, malignity, the source of discord, the parent of intolerance and persecution. It would be unjust not to add, in extenuation of the guilt of those who mistake bigotry for zeal, what our Lord pleaded in behalf of his murderers, *They know not what they do.* This charity, where there appears the smallest scope for it, is due even to the uncharitable. In regard to vital religion, it is to be regretted, that men, even of talents and science, often show little penetration, rarely going deeper than the surface. *The natural man* (saith Paul, 1 Cor. ii, 14, more properly the *animal man*, ψυχικὸς, not φυσικὸς ἀνθρώπος) *receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiri-*  
*tually*

*tually discerned.* Their acquaintance is merely with the outside: they break their teeth upon the shell, without reaching the kernel.

But to return to Ignatius, I say not that the epistles in question ought to be rejected in the lump, but that undue freedoms have been used even with the purest of them, by some over-zealous partizans of the priesthood. They have, in many things, a remarkable coincidence with the sentiments repeatedly inculcated in the apostolic constitutions, a compilation probably begun in the third century, and ended in the fourth or fifth. Among the writers of the second age, I shall mention also Ireneus, who is supposed to have written about the middle of the second century, and in whose writings the names, bishop and presbyter, and others of the like import, are sometimes used indiscriminately. I acknowledge, however, that the distinction of these, as of different orders, began about this time generally to prevail: the difference was not indeed near so considerable as it became afterwards. Accordingly, Ireneus talks in much the same style of both. What at one time he ascribes to bishops, at another he ascribes to presbyters: he speaks of each in the same terms, as entitled to obedience from the people, as succeeding the apostles in the ministry of the word, as those by whom the apostolic doctrine and traditions had been handed



handed down. Thus (lib. iii, chap. 2,) he says, concerning the heretics of his time, “ Cum autem ad eam iterum traditionem quæ est ab apostolis, quæ per successiones presbyterorum in ecclesiis custoditur, provocamus eos, qui adversantur traditioni, dicent se non solum presbyteris, sed etiam apostolis existentes sapientiores, synceram invenisse veritatem.”

Here not only are the presbyters mentioned as the successors of the apostles, but in ranging the ministries, no notice is taken of any intervening order such as that of the bishops. It is not always easy to say, whether by the two appellations, bishop and presbyter, Ireneus means the same order, or different orders. In the former case he would appear to make no distinction, and in the latter very little between them. Dr. Pearson admits, (which by the way is contradicted by Dodwell) that the names, bishop and presbyter, are often interchanged by this father, and others of his time, even to the end of the century. This, however, he maintains, happened only when they spoke of the ministry in general terms, or mentioned those ministers in particular who had preceded them; affirming, that in regard to their own contemporaries, the offices of individuals are never thus confounded. A man, who was in their time a bishop, is not called a presbyter, nor is a presbyter called a bishop. I admit the truth

of this remark, and consider it as a very strong confirmation of the doctrine I have been defending. For what reasonable account can be given of this manner (otherwise chargeable with the most unpardonable inaccuracy) but by saying, that, in the time of the predecessors of Ireneus, there was no distinction worthy of notice in the ministry; whereas, in his own time, the distinction began to be marked by peculiar powers and prerogatives. If this had not been the case, it was as little natural as excusable, to be less accurate in speaking of those that went before, than in speaking of the people of his own time. Was it ever observed of writers in the fourth and fifth centuries, to come no lower, that they in this manner confounded the different ecclesiastical offices of the third? Is Cyprian, for instance, in any succeeding age, styled a presbyter of Carthage, or Rogatian the bishop? Are not their respective titles as uniformly observed in after ages as in their own?

But to return to the epistles of Ignatius, it is not only what we find singular in them, for so early a period, relating to the different orders of ministers in the church, which has raised suspicions of their authenticity, or at least of their integrity; there are other causes which have co-operated in producing the same effect; one is, the style in many places is not suited to the

simplicity of the times immediately succeeding the times of the apostles. It abounds with inflated epithets, unlike the humble manner of the inspired writers ; and in this, as in other respects, seems more formed on that which became fashionable after the acquisition of greater external importance, which opulence never fails to bring, and after the discussion of certain theological questions agitated in the third and fourth centuries, to which we find, sometimes, a manifest allusion. What I am going to observe has much the appearance of anachronism, which often betrays the hand of the interpolator. The expression, *the church which is in Syria*, occurs twice. Now nothing can be more dissimilar to the dialect which had prevailed in the apostolic age, and which continued to prevail in the second century. Except when *the church* denoted the whole christian community, it meant no more than a single congregation. Of this I shall have occasion to take notice presently. Now there were many churches in Syria in the days of Ignatius, and many bishops. Indeed when, through the increase of converts, a bishop's parish came to contain more people than could be comprehended in one congregation, the custom continued, in contradiction to propriety, of still calling his charge *a church*, in the singular number. But it was not till after the distinction

made between the metropolitān and the suffragāns, which was about a century later, that this use originated, of calling all the churches of a province the church, (not the churches) of such a province. To this they were gradually led by analogy. The metropolitan presided among the provincial bishops, as the bishop among the presbyters. The application of the term was, after the rise of patriarchal jurisdiction, extended still further. All that was under the jurisdiction of the archbishop, or patriarch, was his church.

But it is not the style only which has raised suspicion, it is chiefly the sentiments. "Attend to the bishop," says Ignatius to Polycarp, "that God may attend to you. I pledge my soul for theirs who are subject to the bishop, presbyters, and deacons. Let my part in God be with them." *Ἀντιψυχὸν ἐγὼ τῶν υποτασσόμενων τῷ ἐπισκοπῷ κ. τ. λ.* which Cotelerius renders *Decorear ego pro iis qui subditi sunt episcopo, &c.* Admit that, from his adopting the plural of the imperative *προσεχέτε*, in the beginning of the paragraph, he is to be considered as addressing the congregation of Smyrna, and not the bishop, to whom the letter is directed: Is there nothing exceptionable in what he says? Was it the doctrine of Ignatius, that all that is necessary to salvation in a christian is an implicit subjection to the bishop, presbyters, and deacons? Be it that



that he means only in spiritual matters, Is this the style of the apostles to their christian brethren? Was it thus that Ignatius exhibited to his followers the pattern which had been given by that great apostle, who could say of himself and his fellow-apostles, appealing for his voucher to the people's experience of their ministry, *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake.* In exact conformity to this, Paul expressly disclaims all dominion over the faith of his hearers, who, he was sensible, were not to be dictated to, but to be reasoned with, not to be commanded, but to be convinced, *Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.* And a little after, *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.* It is no part of our office to constrain, it is merely to teach; it is not to extort an outward, and perhaps reluctant compliance, but it is by the efficacy of persuasion to subdue the refractory will, and completely engage the heart; for no obedience in this cause is available, which is not voluntary, and does not proceed from love. It suits not even the apostolic diction to prescribe, to order, but to entreat, to pray. *As though God, says the apostle, did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God.* The most authoritative language that he

employs runs in this strain; *I beseech you by the mercies of God, and I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.* Nor is this manner peculiarly Paul's. Peter, the prince of the apostles, as romanists style him, recurs neither to bulls nor to rescripts, but, with equal mildness as his colleague Paul, employs exhortation and entreaty. *The presbyters amongst you, says he, I their fellow presbyter exhort, Feed the flock of God among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly. It is added, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock;* and, consequently, engaging their imitation by the attraction of an amiable example, and not enforcing submission by stern authority and command. Had Ignatius been such as the letters ascribed to him represent him, could he have had the assurance to address his Antiochians in the words of Paul above quoted, “ We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake?” For is it not his predominant scope, in those letters, to preach himself and other ecclesiastics, inculcating upon the people the most submissive, unlimited, and blind obedience to all of the clerical order? This is an everlasting topic, to which he never slips an opportunity of recurring in season, and out of season. The only consistent declaration which would have suited the author of these epistles,

epistles, must have been the reverse of Paul's. We preach not Christ Jesus the Lord, but so far only as may conduce to the increase of our influence, and the exaltation of our power; nay, for an object so important, we are not ashamed to preach up ourselves your masters, with unbounded dominion over your faith, and consequently, over both soul and body. For surely, if, in the application of words, any regard is due to propriety as well as consistency, those only must be called masters who are entitled to command, and those must be servants who are obliged to obey. There are besides several things in these letters which, though expressed with simplicity of diction, I find in meaning unintelligible. Such is that in his letter to the Ephesians, chap. vi, "The more silent a man  
" finds the bishop, he ought to reverence him  
" the more." Consequently if, like the Nazianzene monk, celebrated by Gregory, he should, in praise of God, devote his tongue to an inviolable taciturnity, he would be completely venerable. This, one would be tempted to think, has originated from some opulent ecclesiastic, who was by far too great a man for preaching; at least we may say, it seems an oblique apology for those who have no objection to any thing implied in a bishopric, except the function. None whose notion of the duties of a bishop

corresponded with Isaiah's idea of a watchman, (lvi, 10,) would have thought dumbness a recommendation. Yet Ezekiel did not think his prophetic office disparaged by God's telling him, that he had made him a watchman to the house of Israel, (iii, 17.) I shall only add, that if I be not perfectly unprejudiced on this subject, the prejudice by which I am biassed is not against Ignatius, but in his favour. It is because I think very highly of the martyr, and have a strong impression of his virtue, and of the service which his sufferings and testimony did to the cause of his master, that I am unwilling rashly to attribute to him what could not fail to lessen him in my estimation. I would save him, if possible, from a second martyrdom in his works, through the attempts not of open enemies, but of deceitful friends.

But should we admit, after all, in opposition to strong presumptive evidence, the intire genuineness of the letters in question, all that could be fairly inferred from the concession is, that the distinction of orders and subordination of the presbyters, obtained about twenty or thirty years earlier than I have supposed, and that it was a received distinction at Antioch, and in Asia Minor, before it was known in Macedonia and other parts of the christian church. That its prevalence has been gradual, and that its introduction



duction has arisen from the example and influence of some of the principal cities, is highly probable.

I shall mention only one other ancient author by whom the three orders seem to be discriminated, and whose testimony is commonly produced in support of their apostolical institution. The author is Pius, bishop of Rome, reckoned by the romanists the ninth in succession from Peter and Paul, and, consequently, the sixth or seventh from Clement, for they are not intirely agreed about the order. All that remains of him are two short letters to Justus, bishop of Vienna. He is supposed to have written these a little before the middle of the second century, but after Ignatius and Polycarp. This comes so close to the time, when I admit the distinction to have generally obtained, that even the clearest testimony from him, though there were no doubt as to the authenticity of the letters, could not be said to weaken my hypothesis. There is something in his words which appears even to favour that hypothesis. At the same time that they mark a distinction, they show it to be but in its infancy, and not comparable to what it arose to in a few centuries. Passing the obscure and indefinite expression, *colobio episcoporum vestitus*, the only passage which is apposite to the question, is in his second letter: “ Presbyteri,  
O 4 “ et

“ et diaconi non ut majorem, sed ut ministrum  
 “ Christi te observent.” “ Let the presbyters  
 “ and deacons reverence thee (the bishop) not  
 “ as their superiour, but as Christ’s minister.”

I do not say that these words imply that there was no superiority in the bishop. If there had been none, I do not think it would have been natural to add the clause *non ut majorem*. But they imply that the writer thought this difference too inconsiderable to be a ground of esteem from colleagues in the ministry; and that he accounted the true foundation of their respect to be superiour diligence in the service. I believe it will be admitted by the impartial and intelligent, that such an expression from a bishop (not to say the bishop of Rome) in the fourth or fifth century, would have been reckoned rather derogatory from the authority of the office, which would have been thought justly entitled to respect and obedience, independently of the personal merit of the officer.

But that the two functions of bishop and presbyter were, through the whole of that age, occasionally comprehended under the same name, and considered as one office, and not two, I shall show further, by an example from Clement of Alexandria, who wrote at the close of the second century. Having observed, (Strom. L. 1,) that in most things there are two sorts of ministry;

nistry; the one of a nobler nature than the other, which is subservient; and having illustrated this distinction, as by other examples, so by that of philosophy and physic, the former of which he considers as superiour, because it administers medicine to the soul, the latter as inferiour, because it administers only to the body, he adds, *Ομοίως δε καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, τὴν μὲν βελιωτικὴν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι σωζέουσιν εἰκόνα τὴν ὑπηρετικὴν οἱ διακονοὶ, ταύτας ἀμφοτέρως διακονίας ἀγγελοὶ τε ὑπηρετεῖναι τῷ θεῷ, κατὰ τὴν τῶν περιγείων οἰκονομίαν.*

“ Just so in the church the presbyters are entrusted with the dignified ministry, the deacons with the subordinate. Both kinds of service the angels perform to God in the administration of this lower world.” Here the distinction is strongly marked between presbyter and deacon: but is it not plain from his words, that Clement considered the distinction between bishop and presbyter as, even in his days, comparatively not worthy of his notice?

But passing all critical disquisitions in regard to the precise time and manner of the introduction, as necessarily involved in darkness and uncertainty, and admitting that the distinction obtained generally before the middle of the second century, let us now inquire into the nature of that episcopacy which then came to be established. It has once and again been observed

served passingly, that every church had its own pastors, and its own presbytery, independently of every other church. And when one of the presbyters came to be considered as *the pastor* by way of eminence, while the rest were regarded only as his assistants, vicars, or curates, who acted under his direction; as then every church or congregation had but one who was called bishop, so every bishop had but one congregation or church. This is a remark which deserves your particular notice, as it regards an essential point in the constitution of the primitive church, a point which is generally admitted by those who can make any pretensions to the knowledge of christian antiquities. In the epistles written to particular congregations, or churches, during the third century, and in some before, notice is almost always taken of their own bishop and presbytery, as belonging specially to themselves. The great patrons of the hierarchy, who found so much on the testimony of Ignatius, will not deny, that on this article he is quite explicit. The bishop's charge is, in the primitive writers, invariably denominated *ἐκκλησία*, a church, or congregation, in the singular number, never *ἐκκλησίας*, churches, or congregations, in the plural.

But as this argument may not appear so strong to those, who are accustomed to form  
their



their opinion of things from the import of their names in modern dialects, it will not be amiss to inquire particularly into the ancient applications of the word. Properly there are, in the New Testament, but two original senses of the word *ἐκκλησία*, which can be called different, though related. One is, when it denotes a number of people actually assembled, or accustomed to assemble together, and is then properly rendered by the English terms, congregation, convention, assembly, and even sometimes crowd, as in Acts xix, 32, 40. The other sense is to denote a society united together by some common tie, though not convened, perhaps not convenable, in one place. And in this acceptation, as well as in the former, it sometimes occurs in classical writers, as signifying a state, or commonwealth, and nearly corresponding to the Latin *civitas*. When the word is limited, or appropriated, as it generally is in the New Testament, by its regimen, as *τὴ θεῷ*, *τὴ κυρίῳ*, *τὴ Χριστῷ*, or by the scope of the place, it is always to be explained in one or other of the two senses following, corresponding to the two general senses above mentioned. It denotes either a single congregation of christians, in correspondence to the first, or the whole christian community, in correspondence to the second. We can hardly ever be at a loss to know from the context which of the two is implied.

plied. That it is in the former acceptation, is sometimes evident from the words in construction, as *της εκκλησιας τη εν Κεγχρεαις*, and *τη εκκλησιας τς θες τη εν Κορινθω*, and the like. In the latter sense it ought always to be understood when we find nothing in the expression, or in the scope of the passage, to determine us to limit it; for instance in the following, *Επι Ιαυτη τη πειρα οικοδομησω με την εκκλησιαν. Ο κυριος προσετιθει τς σωζομενες καθ' ημεραν τη εκκλησια.* In this last acceptation of the word, for the whole body of Christ's disciples, wheresoever dispersed, it came afterwards to be distinguished by the epithet *καθολικη*. They said *η εκκλησια η καθολικη*, the catholic or universal church.

But in any intermediate sense, between a single congregation and the whole community of christians, not one instance can be brought of the application of the word in sacred writ. We speak now, indeed, (and this has been the manner for ages) of the Gallican church, the Greek church, the church of England, the church of Scotland, as of societies independent and complete in themselves. Such a phraseology was never adopted in the days of the apostles. They did not say the church of Asia, or the church of Macedonia, or the church of Achaia, but the churches of God in Asia, the churches in Macedonia, the churches in Achaia. The plural  
number

number is invariably used when more congregations than one are spoken of, unless the subject be of the whole commonwealth of Christ. Nor is this the manner of the penmen of sacred writ only. It is the constant usage of the term in the writings of ecclesiastic authors for the two first centuries. The only instance to the contrary that I remember to have observed is in the epistles of Ignatius, on which I have already remarked.

It adds considerable strength to our argument, that this is exactly conformable to the usage, in regard to this term, which had always obtained among the Jews. The whole nation, or commonwealth of Israel, was often denominated *πασα ἡ ἐκκλησια Ισραηλ*. And after the revolt of the ten tribes, when they ceased to make one people or state with the other two, we hear of *πασα ἡ ἐκκλησια Ιουδα*. This is the large or comprehensive use of the word as above observed. In regard to the more confined application, the same term *ἐκκλησια* was also employed to denote a number of people, either actually assembled, or wont to assemble, in the same place. Thus all belonging to the same synagogue were called indifferently *ἐκκλησια*, or *συναγωγη*, as these words in the Jewish use were nearly synonymous. But never did they call the people belonging to  
several

several neighbouring synagogues *ἐκκλησία*, or *συναγωγή*, in the singular number, but *ἐκκλησίαι* and *συναγωγαι*, in the plural. Any other use in the apostles, therefore, must have been as unprecedented and unnatural as it would have been improper, and what could not fail to lead their hearers or readers into mistakes. There are some other differences between the modern and the ancient applications of this word, which I shall take another opportunity of observing.

Now as one bishop is invariably considered, in the most ancient usage, as having only one *ἐκκλησία*, it is manifest that his inspection at first was only over one parish. Indeed, the words congregation and parish are, if not synonymous, predicable of each other. The former term relates more properly to the people as actually congregated, the other relates to the extent of ground which the dwelling houses of the members of one congregation occupy. Accordingly, the territory to which the bishop's charge extended, was always named, in the period I am speaking of, in Greek *παροικία*, in Latin *parochia*, or rather *paroccia*, which answers to the English word *parish*, and means properly a neighbourhood.

Let it not be imagined that I lay too great stress on the import of words, whose signifi-



tions in time come insensibly to alter. It merits to be observed, that, in the first application of a name to a particular purpose, there is commonly a strict regard paid to etymology. As this word, together with the adjective *παρισius*, vicinus, neighbouring, are conjugates of the verb *παρισκω*, *accolo*, *juxta habito*, it can be applied no otherwise when it relates to place, than the term parish is with us at this day. And this exactly agrees with the exposition of the word given by Stephanus, that learned and accurate lexicographer. “ Ego non parochias primum, sed parœcias appellatas esse censeo: *παρισκοι* enim sunt *ακκολæ*, quare qui fanum aliquod accolunt *παροεκι* dicti sunt, ejusdem scilicet fani *consortes*, et parœcia *accolarum* conventus et *accolatus*, sacraque vicinia, nam *παρισκοι* dicuntur etiam *οι προσκοι*, id est vicini.”

Let it be observed further, that in those early ages the bishop's charge or district was never called *διοικησις*, a diocese, concerning the import of which I shall add the following passage from the same authority. “ Latini quoque utuntur hoc vocabulo: *diocèses* vocantes quasdam quasi minores provincias, quas aliquis, qui eis præfectus est, administrat, et in quibus jus dicit, unde et pontificum *διοικησεις* apud recentiores.” Thus in a few ages afterwards, when the bishop's charge became so extensive as more

to

to resemble a province than a parish, nay, when in fact it comprized many churches and parishes within it, the name was changed, and it was then very properly called a diocese. The other term, without deviating in the least from its original and proper import, received a new application to that which was put under the cure of a presbyter only.

But I shall offer a few more thoughts on this subject in my next prelection, and shall consider more particularly the constitution of the church, and the powers of the several orders of its ministers in the second and third centuries.

## LECTURE VII.

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IN some preceding discourses, I have considered the nature and different orders of the ministry in the church constituted by the apostles. Particularly in my last lecture on this subject, I entered on the examination of that which immediately succeeded it, and took place in the second and third centuries. I observed, that, before the middle of the second century, a subordination in the ecclesiastic polity, which I call primitive episcopacy, began to obtain very generally throughout the christian world; every single church or congregation having a plurality of presbyters, who, as well as the deacons, were all under the superintendency of one pastor or bishop. I observed, that all antiquity are unanimous in assigning to one bishop no more than one *εκκλησια* or congregation, and one *παροικια* or parish. For this reason, though it was a proper episcopacy, in respect of the disparity of the ministers, it was a parochial episcopacy, in respect of the extent of the charge. I endeavoured

to set this matter in a stronger light from the consideration of the import of these words *ἐκκλησία* and *παροικία*, according to the ancient usage.

But that I may not be thought to depend too much on the signification of names and words, I shall evince, beyond all possible doubt, that the bishop's cure was originally confined to a single church or congregation. This I intend to show from the particulars recorded in ancient authors, in relation both to him and to it. For brevity's sake, I shall not produce the passages at length from the fathers of the second and third centuries referred to, but shall barely mention the principal topics which serve to vouch the fact, and which can be verified from the clearest and most explicit declarations of those primitive writers, particularly of Ignatius, (for though the work ascribed to him is with reason suspected to have been interpolated with a view to aggrandize the episcopal order, it was never suspected of any interpolation with a view to lessen it) of Justin Martyr, of Ireneus, of Tertullian, of Cyprian, and several others. Indeed, the facts I found upon are incontrovertible.

Now from the writings of those fathers, it is evident, that the whole flock assembled in the same place, *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό*, with their bishop and presbyters, as on other occasions, so in particular every Lord's day, or every Sunday, as it was  
commonly



commonly called, for the purposes of public worship, hearing the Scriptures read, and receiving spiritual exhortations. The perseverance in this practice is warmly recommended by the ancients, and urged on all the christian brethren; from the consideration of the propriety there is, that those of the same church and parish, and under the same bishop, should all join in one prayer and one supplication, as people who have one mind and one hope. For it is argued, “ if  
 “ the prayer of one or two have great efficacy,  
 “ how much more efficacious must that be  
 “ which is made by the bishop and the whole  
 “ church. He, therefore, who doth not assemble  
 “ with him is denominated proud and self-con-  
 “ demned.” Again, as there was but one place of meeting, so there was but one communion table or altar, as they sometimes metaphorically called it. “ There is but one altar,” said Ignatius, “ as there is but one bishop.” *Ἐν θυσιαστηρίῳ ὡς εἰς ἐπισκοπῶν*.

Nothing can be more contemptible than the quibbles which some keen controvertists have employed, to elude the force of this expression. They will have it to import one sort of unity in the first clause, and quite a different sort in the second, though the second is introduced merely in explanation of the first. In the first, say they, it denotes not a numerical, but a mystical

unity, not one thing, but one kind of thing; in the second, one identical thing. One would think it impossible for a writer more accurately, by any words, to fix his meaning. The illustration of *one bishop* puts it beyond question what sort of unity he ascribes to the altar, one altar as one bishop; insomuch that if, in a consistency with his assertion, there can be, in one diocese, but one individual bishop, there can be, in one diocese, but one individual altar; and contrariwise, if in a consistency with his assertion, there may be, in one diocese, many individual altars of the same kind, there may be also many individual bishops of the same kind. Indeed, by their mode of interpreting, the simile adduced, so far from tending, agreeably to the author's design, to explain and illustrate, serves only to confound and mislead. What he ought to have said is the reverse of what he did say. He ought, on that hypothesis, to have said, There is one altar, but not as there is one bishop, for in regard to the last, the bishop, we affirm, that there is literally and properly but one in a diocese; in regard to the first, the altar, we affirm the unity only figuratively and improperly, since, in the literal sense, there may be many. The like chicane has been employed for eluding the argument founded on the expressions *one prayer* and *one supplication*.

But

But to return; when the eucharist (which we more commonly denominate the Lord's supper) was celebrated, the whole people of the parish, or bishopric, if ye please to call it so, communicated in the same congregation, and all received the sacrament, if not from the hands of the bishop, at least under his eye. Hence it was that the setting up another altar within the limits of his parish, beside the one altar of the bishop, was considered as the great criterion of schism. And as the whole of the bishop's parish generally received the symbols of Christ's body and blood, mediately or immediately, from his hand, so they were, for the most part, baptized, either by him, or in his presence. He had also the particular superintendancé of all the christian poor, the widows, the orphans, the strangers, the prisoners, within the bounds of his charge, and the chief direction in the disposal of the public charities. The testimonials, or *literæ formatæ*, as they were called, which private christians were obliged to have when removing from one district to another, that they might be received as brethren in other christian congregations, were all signed by the bishop, in like manner as with us they are signed by the minister of the parish. Now all the particulars above-mentioned were considered as belonging to his office. No doubt when, through sickness or

necessary absence, he could not discharge any part himself; his place was supplied by one or more of his presbyters or vicars. Nay, it was even thought befitting, that the bishop should know, by name, every individual of his flock, and that there should not be a marriage among them without his approbation.

When all these things, which are supported by unexceptionable testimonies, are duly weighed, is it possible to conceive otherwise of the bishop, during the period I am here speaking of, than as of the pastor of a single parish? He answers precisely to what, in later times, has been called *the parson*; a title of respect when it first came into use, though I know not how, through the caprice of custom, it at present conveys an idea of disrespectful familiarity. The presbyters were his counsellors and assistants, or, as people would now denominate them, his curates. I do not pretend that this resemblance holds in every particular, though it plainly does in most. Perhaps, in some things, the case may bear a greater analogy to some highland parishes in this northern part of the island, wherein, by reason of their territorial extent, the pastor is under the necessity of having ordained itinerant assistants, whom he can send, as occasion requires, to supply his place in the remote parts of his charge.

This,



This, by the way, suggests the principal difference between those ancient and the greater part of modern parishes. In general (not indeed universally) they were larger in respect of territory, though even, in this respect, far short of a modern diocese. But it is not so much by the measure of the ground as by the number of the people, that the extent of a pastoral charge is to be reckoned. Now that, in this last respect, they did not, at first, exceed modern parishes, is manifest from the several particulars which have been observed above. Nay, if every circumstance be considered, there is reason to believe that they were less. There were yet no magnificent edifices, built for the reception of christian assemblies, such as were afterwards reared at a great expense, and called churches. Their best accommodation, for more than a century, was the private houses of the wealthiest disciples, which were but ill adapted to receive very numerous conventions. However, as it was but a small part of the people of a city or village, with its environs, which composed the church, the extent of territory, that would be necessary to supply the pastor with one sufficient congregation, must be so much the greater in proportion as the number of unconverted Jews and Heathens would exceed the number of converts. Suppose at the time the churches were

first planted by the apostles, the christians at a medium were one-thirtieth part of the people. This I believe is rather counting high, for in very populous cities, like Rome and Alexandria, we have no reason to think that they amounted to one hundredth part. However, as in a supposition of this kind, intended merely for illustration, there is no occasion for historical exactness; let the number of christians be reckoned one thirtieth of the inhabitants over all Asia Minor. Suppose further, that country to have been equal then, in point of populousness, to what Great Britain is at present. One of their bishoprics, in order to afford a congregation equal to that of a middling parish, ought to have been equal in extent to thirty parishes in this island. Yet take them at an average, and they will be found to have been scarcely equal to one-third of that number. By the account which Bingham gives us in his *Christian Antiquities*, (b. ix, ch. ii, sect. 8,) an author by no means inclined to diminish the episcopal dignity, the whole forty-eight bishoprics, in the fourth century, comprehended in the patriarchate of Jerusalem, were no more than equal to two middling German dioceses. And as that patriarchate included three provinces under their respective metropolitans, the district of a primate,

or

or metropolitan, in Palestine, under whom there were many bishops, wanted one third to be of equal extent with the precincts of an ordinary bishop in Germany. We may, however, form some notion of the origin of those extensive parishes, for, considered as parishes, they must be called extensive, from what happens in the manner of proceeding adopted by any new religious sect, which springs up amongst ourselves. Where their proselytes are not numerous, the parishes or districts assigned to their ministers must be so much the more extended. In fact, they are not less sometimes, if we reckon by the distance of one conventicle from another, than twenty, thirty, or even fifty miles in length.

Bingham has observed, on the province of Pontus Polemoniæ, that it comprehended only five dioceses, and that of those Neocesaria, the metropolis, was no less than a hundred miles from Polemonium, and sixty from Comana, the two nearest bishoprics, or rather the two nearest episcopal residences. But he has not thought proper to observe also, what Tillemont hath shewn from Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, both natives of Cappadocia, that, in the middle of the third century, there were no more than seventeen believers in that extensive diocese: and these probably all resided in the city. Could fewer be properly associated into one congregation?

It

It deserves likewise to be remarked, that the largeness, even in point of territory, of those primitive parishes or dioceses, if you please to call them so, was more in appearance than in reality. In a particular province, I shall suppose, there were, immediately after the first publication of the gospel, twelve parishes erected. This does by no means imply, that the whole province was divided into twelve parishes, though this is the way in which we too commonly understand it. There might be, and often were, many towns, and villages, and tracts of land, in the province, wherein there were no christians at all, and which therefore were not at first considered as belonging to any of those parishes. A parish generally was in fact no more than one city or village, with its suburbs and environs. Afterwards, indeed, when in such places as had not been originally included there came to be some christian converts, these would naturally join themselves to the congregation assembling in the nearest town or village; which, agreeably to the fraternal love that then prevailed among the disciples of Christ, would cordially receive them. This was one principal cause of the gradual enlargement of parishes, as it proved afterwards the cause, (when christianity became the religion of the empire, and when, by the sudden accession of multitudes of converts from all quarters, a  
subdi-



subdivision of what appeared to be comprehended under the original districts was necessary, it then I say proved the cause) that the antient parishes, still retaining their first names, assumed the form as well as the extent of dioceses. But of this more afterwards.

It adds not a little to the credibility of the account now given, that it represents the christian churches as originally analogous, in point of polity, to the Jewish establishment of synagogues. Nothing can be more evident than that, in respect of the exterior part, it was the intention of the founders of the church to adopt, as far as possible, that model which, under the conduct of providence, had been settled in Judea, as some learned men think, by the prophet Ezra. Certain it is, that the very names of church-officers were borrowed from the synagogue, which had also its elders, overseers, deacons, or almoners; and amongst whom one usually presided, who was called the angel of the congregation, the title given by our Lord in the Apocalypse to the presidents of christian assemblies. Now it is well known, that among the Jews, every synagogue had its own ministry, and was complete in itself, having no dependency except on the sanhedrim, or supreme council of the nation. Such a thing as several synagogues, under the  
inspection

inspection of the same minister, or ministers, was never heard of.

But to return to the administration of religious ordinances in those primitive parishes, let it be observed, that though the presbyters were all assistants to the bishop, in the discharge of all parochial duties, the parish was not then divided or parcelled out among them like a modern diocese. They all, with their bishop and the people, as was observed above, assembled in one place, for the public offices of religion. “For where “should the flock be,” says Ignatius, “but “with their shepherd?” And this title was given to him by way of eminence. The principal part of the work of the presbyters, beside what belonged to their judicial capacity in the presbytery, was, by the bishop’s direction, to execute the less public parts of the pastoral function, as visiting the sick, instructing and preparing the catechumens, exhorting the penitents, and other such ministerial offices in those parts of the parish, (for all the presbyters belonged in common to the whole) to which he found it reasonable to send them. They also assisted him in the public offices of religion; and when he was sick, or otherwise necessarily absent, they supplied his place. As the charge of the parish was eminently devolved upon him, they acted in all the ministerial

ministerial duties by his direction, or at least with his permission. The only question of moment that has been raised on this head is, whether, by his order or allowance, they could exercise every part of the pastoral office as well as the bishop, or whether there were some things, such as ordaining others to the ministry, which even his commands could not empower them to do. As the power of the bishops arose, and that of the presbyters sunk gradually, I am disposed to think, that, in the course of two centuries, or even a century and a half, there was a considerable difference, in this respect, in the state of things, at the beginning and at the end. Towards the conclusion of that period, I imagine, it became very unusual for a bishop to delegate this, which was ever looked upon as the most sacred and most momentous trust, to his presbyters. The transition is very natural from *seldom* to *never*; and, in our ways of judging, the transition is as natural from what never is done, to what cannot lawfully be done.

We know that some time after the period to which I have here confined myself, ordination by presbyters was prohibited, and declared null by ecclesiastical canons. But the very prohibitions themselves, the very assertions of those whom they condemned as heretics, prove the practice, then probably wearing, but not quite worn out.

There

There was no occasion for making canons against ordination by deacons, or by laymen, who did not pretend to such a right. In deference, however, to the apostle Paul's authority, the bishop still admitted, and even required, all the presbyters present to join with him in ordaining a presbyter, by the imposition of their hands with his, but not in ordaining a bishop. They did not reflect, that in the only instance mentioned by Paul, the presbytery had assisted in ordaining an evangelist, an extraordinary minister, even superiour to a bishop. The arbitrary supposition of Chrysostom, who was himself a bishop and a patriarch, about four hundred years afterwards, when things were on a very different footing, and when the episcopate, on account of the wealth and secular power that accompanied it, was become a great object of ambition, (Chrysostom's supposition) that by the presbytery the apostle meant a synod of bishops, a notion totally unsupported by evidence, and repugnant to the uniform usage of the term in christian antiquity, has hardly merit enough to entitle it to be mentioned.

But that, about the middle of the third century, the presbyters were still considered as vested with the power of conferring orders, has been plausibly argued from an expression of Firmilian, in his letter to Cyprian: " Quando omnis potestas et gratia in ecclesia constituta sit, ubi  
 " præ-



“ præsident majores natu, qui et baptizandi, et  
 “ manum imponendi, et ordinandi possident po-  
 “ testatem.” Cypr. Epist. 75, in some editions  
 the 43d. That by *majores natu*, in latin, is  
 meant the same with *πρεσβύτεροι*, in greek, of  
 which it is indeed a literal version, can scarcely  
 be thought questionable. Besides, the phrase so  
 exactly coincides with that of Tertullian, who  
 says, “ Probatī præsident seniores,” approved  
 elders preside, as to make the application, if pos-  
 sible, still clearer. Indeed, if we were not to  
 consider the latin, *majores natu*, as meant to cor-  
 respond to the greek, *πρεσβύτεροι*, the only transla-  
 tion we could give to the phrase, used by Firmi-  
 lian, would be, “ where old men preside;” an  
 affirmation which could hardly ever have been in  
 such general terms given with truth. For when  
 the canonical age of bishops came to be esta-  
 blished, it was no more than thirty; and it is a  
 certain fact, that, both before and after that ca-  
 non, several were ordained younger. I am far  
 from thinking, that under this term, *majores*  
*natu*, those who were then peculiarly called  
 bishops are not included, or even principally in-  
 tended; but what I maintain is, that, now that  
 the distinction had obtained, the use of so com-  
 prehensive a term seems sufficiently to shew,  
 that it was not his intention to affirm it of the  
 latter order, exclusively of the former, else he  
 would

would never have employed a word which, when used strictly, was appropriated to the former order, and not to the latter. Thus the name *priests*, in english, in the plural number, is often adopted to denote the clergy in general, both bishops and priests. But no intelligent person, that understands the language, and does not intend to deceive, would express himself in this manner: "In the church of England, the priests have the power of baptizing, confirming, and ordaining." Nor could he excuse himself by pretending, that in regard to the two last articles, he meant by the word priests the bishops, exclusively of those more commonly, and for distinction's sake, called priests. Yet the two cases are exactly parallel; for, in Firmilian's time, the distinction of the three orders was, though not so considerable, as well known by the christians in Cappadocia, and in Africa, as they are at this day in England. This also serves to shew, how little truth there is in that observation of Dodwell's, quoted in a former discourse, that from Ignatius' time, the distinction of the names was most accurately observed by all christian writers.

As another eminent authority I shall produce Cyprian. I recur to him the more willingly, because he is held the great apostle of high-church. Cyprian's own words, in Epist. 5, directed to his  
presbyters

presbyters and deacons at Carthage, when he himself for some time found it necessary to retire, are these: “ Quoniam mihi interesse nunc  
“ non permittit loci conditio, peto vos pro fide  
“ et religione vestra, fungamini illic et vestris  
“ partibus et meis, ut nihil vel ad disciplinam vel  
“ ad diligentiam desit.” Is it to be supposed, that he would have so expressly enjoined them, without exception or limitation, to discharge the duties of his function as well as their own, if neither presbyters nor deacons could do any thing in ordination, that part which was the chief of all? Nay, might it not be justly thought, that if he meant to except this, he would have given them some hint in that letter, what method, in case of any vacancy in their presbytery, (which, during his absence, would be doubly inconvenient) they should take, to get it quickly and properly supplied? But his general rule for the removal of all doubts, and which renders the descending to particulars unnecessary, is, that they are to discharge his office, and their own.

To come to the writers of the age that succeeded, the first I shall mention is Hilary, a Roman deacon, whom I had occasion to mention once before, who wrote a commentary upon Paul's epistles about the middle of the fourth century. His works are always bound up with those of Ambrose, bishop of Milan; and, by some blunder

in the editors, continue to pass under his name. He is sometimes quoted by moderns under the name of Pseudambrose and Ambrosioster. Of his commentary Sixtus de Sienna has given this character: "In omnes Pauli epistolas libri quatuordecim, breves quidem in verbis, sed sententiarum pondere graves;" which is entirely approved by Richard Simon, of the oratory, (*Hist. Crit. du Nouveau Test.* p. 3, chap. ix,) who adds, "There are few ancient commentaries on the epistles of St. Paul, and even on the whole New Testament, which can be compared with this." This commentator, in his exposition of the third chapter of the first epistle to Timothy, has these words: "Post episcopum tamen diaconi ordinationem subjecit. Quare? nisi quia episcopi et prebyteri una ordinatio est? Uterque enim sacerdos est. Sed episcopus primus est; at omnis episcopus presbyter sit, non omnis presbyter episcopus. Hic enim episcopus est, qui inter presbyteros primus est. Denique Timotheum presbyterum ordinatum significat, sed quia ante se alterum non habebat, episcopus erat." Nothing can be more evident, than that the whole distinction of the episcopate is here ascribed to seniority in the ministry, without either election or special ordination. When the bishop died, the senior colleague succeeded of course. As to ordination, it was



the same in both; and bishop meant no more than first among the presbyters, or the senior presbyter. This is very probably the footing on which the precedency in the presbytery originally stood, though it did not long remain so. It was out of the earliest converts that the first pastors were chosen; and the conclusion is analogical, that the oldest pastor would be entitled to preside.

Another witness whom I shall adduce is Jerom, who wrote about the end of the fourth century, and the beginning of the fifth. The testimony which I shall bring from him, regards the practice that had long subsisted at Alexandria. I shall give you the passage in his own words from his epistle to Evagrius. “*Alexandriæ a Marco evangelista usque ad Heraclam et Dionysium episcopos, presbyteri semper unum ex se electum, in excelsiori gradu collocatum, episcopum nominabunt: quomodo si exercitus imperatorem faciat: aut diaconi eligant de se quem industrium noverint, et archidiaconum vocent.*” I know it has been said, that this relates only to the election of the bishop of Alexandria, and not to his ordination. To me it is manifest that it relates to both; or, to express myself with greater precision, it was the intention of that father to signify, that no other ordination than this election, and those ceremonies

with which the presbyters might please to accompany it, such as the instalment and salutation, was then and there thought necessary to one who had been ordained a presbyter before; that according to the usage of that church, this form was all that was requisite to constitute one of the presbyters their bishop. But as I am sensible, that unsupported assertions are entitled to no regard on either side, I shall assign my reasons from the author's own words, and then leave every one to judge for himself.

Jerom, in the preceding part of this letter, had been maintaining, in opposition to some deacon, who had foolishly boasted of the order of deacons as being superiour to the order of presbyters, Jerom, I say, had been maintaining, that in the original and apostolical constitution of the church, bishop and presbyter were but two names for the same office. That ye may be satisfied that what he says implies no less, I shall give it you in his own words.—“*Audio quendam in tantam eru-*

+ “*pisse vecordiam, ut diaconas presbyteris, id*  
 “*est episcopis, anteferret. Nam cum apostolus*  
 “*perspicue doceat eosdem esse presbyteros quos*  
 “*episcopos, quid patitur mensarum et viduarum*  
 “*minister, ut supra eos, se tumidus efferat.*”

For this purpose he had, in a cursory manner, pointed out some of those arguments from the New Testament, which I took occasion, in a

former

former discourse, to illustrate. In regard to the introduction of the episcopal order, as then commonly understood, in contradistinction to that of presbyter, he signifies, that it did not exist from the beginning, but was merely an expedient devised after the times of the apostles, in order the more effectually to preserve unity in every church, as in case of differences among the pastors, it would be of importance to have one acknowledged superiour, in whose determination they were bound to acquiesce. His words are:—  
“ Quod autem *postea* :” he had been speaking immediately before of the times of the apostles,  
“ unus electus est, qui cæteris preponeretur, in  
“ schismatis remedium factum est, ne unus  
“ quisque ad se trahens, Christi ecclesiam rum-  
“ peret.” Then follows the passage quoted above concerning the church of Alexandria. Nothing can be plainer than that he is giving an account of the first introduction of the episcopate, (as the word was then understood) which he had been maintaining was not a different order from that of presbyter, but merely a certain pre-eminence conferred by election, for the expedient purpose of preventing schism. And in confirmation of what he had advanced, that this election was all that at first was requisite, he tells the story of the manner that had long been practised and held sufficient for constituting a bishop

in the metropolis of Egypt. It is accordingly introduced thus: "Nam et Alexandria," as a case entirely apposite, to wit, an instance of a church in which a simple election had continued to be accounted sufficient for a longer time than in other churches, an instance which had remained a vestige and evidence of the once universal practice.

Now if he meant only to tell us, as some would have it, that there the election of the bishop was in the presbyters, there was no occasion to recur to Alexandria for an example, or to a former period, as that continued still to be a very common, if not the general, practice throughout the church. And though it be allowed to have been still the custom in most places, to get also the concurrence or consent of the people, this shews more strongly how frivolous the argument from their being electors would have been in favour of presbyters, as equal in point of order to bishops, and consequently superiour to deacons; since, in regard to most places, as much as this could be said concerning those who are inferiour to deacons, the very meanest of the people, who had all a suffrage in the election of their bishop. But understood in the way I have explained it, the argument has both sense and strength in it, and is in effect as follows:—There can be no essential difference  
between



between the order of bishop, and that of presbyter, since, to make a bishop, nothing more was necessary at first (and of this practice the church of Alexandria remained long an example) than the nomination of his fellow presbyters; and no ceremony of consecration was required, but what was performed by them, and consisted chiefly in placing him in a higher seat, and saluting him bishop\*.

Add to this, that the very examples this father makes use of for illustration, shew manifestly, that his meaning must have been as I have represented it. His first instance is the election of an emperor by the army, which he calls expressly making an emperor. And is it not a matter of public notoriety, that the emperors, raised in this manner, did, from that moment, without waiting any other inauguration, assume the imperial titles, and exercise the imperial power? And did they not treat all as rebels who opposed them? If possible, the other example is still more decisive. To constitute an archdeacon in the sense in

\* Was ever any thing more frivolous than Pearson's criticism on the distinction between *a se* and *ex se*, the phrase used in the above quotation \*? Or could any thing be conceived more foreign to Jerom's purpose, than the whole passage, as the bishop has thought fit to interpret it?

\* *Vindiciæ Ignatianæ*, p. 1, c. 1.

which the word was then used, no other form of investiture was necessary, but his election, which was in Jerom's time solely in his fellow deacons; though this also, with many other things, came afterwards into the hands of the bishop. By this example he also very plainly acquaints us, that the bishop originally stood in the same relation to the presbyters, in which the archdeacon, in his own time, did to the other deacons, and was by consequence no other than what the arch-presbyter came to be afterwards, the first among the presbyters.

But does not Jerom, after all, admit, in the very next sentence, the superiority of bishops in the exclusive privilege of ordaining? True: he admits it as a distinction that then actually obtained; but the whole preceding part of his letter was written to evince, that from the beginning it was not so. From ancient times he descends to times then modern, and from distant countries he comes to his own; concluding, that still there was but one article of moment whereby their powers were discriminated. “Quid enim facit, excepta ordinatione, episcopus, quod presbyter non faciat?” This indeed proves sufficiently, that at that time presbyters were not allowed to ordain. But it can prove nothing more, for in regard to his sentiments about the rise of this difference, it was impossible

to be more explicit than he had been through the whole epistle. I shall only add, that for my part I cannot conceive another interpretation, that can give either weight to his argument, or consistency to his words. The interpretation I have given does both, and that without any violence to the expression.

I might plead Jerom's opinion in this case—I do plead only his testimony. I say I might plead his opinion, as the opinion of one who lived in an age when the investigation of the origin of any ecclesiastical order, or custom, must have been incomparably easier than it can be to us at this distance of time. I might plead his opinion, as the opinion of a man who had more erudition than any person then in the church, the greatest linguist, the greatest critic, the greatest antiquary of them all. But I am no friend to an implicit deference to human authority in matters of opinion. Let his sentiments be no further regarded, than the reasons by which they are supported are found to be good. I do plead only his testimony, as a testimony in relation to a matter of fact, both recent and notorious; since it regarded the then late uniform practice of the church of Alexandria, a city, which, before Constantinople became the seat of empire, was, next to Rome, the most eminent in the christian world. To the same purpose the testimony of the Alexandrian patriarch,

+ patriarch Eutychius has been pleaded, who, in his annals of that church, takes notice of the same practice, but with greater particularity of circumstances than had been done by Jerom. Eutychius tells us, that the number of presbyters therein was always twelve; and that, on occasion of a vacancy in the episcopal chair, they chose one of themselves, whom the remaining eleven ordained bishop by imposition of hands and benediction. In these points, it is evident, there is nothing that can be said to contradict the testimony of Jerom. All that can be affirmed is, that the one mentions particulars about which the other had been silent. But it will be said, there is one circumstance, the duration assigned to this custom, wherein there seems to be a real contradiction. Jerom brings it no farther down than Heracla and Dionysius; whereas Eutychius represents it as continuing to the time of Alexander, about fifty years later. Now it is not impossible, that a circumstantiated custom might have been in part abolished at one time, and in part at another. But admit that in this point, the two testimonies are contradictory, that will by no means invalidate their credibility as to those points on which they are agreed. The difference, on the contrary, as it is an evidence, that the last did not copy from the first, and that they are therefore two witnesses, and not one,

serves



serves rather as a confirmation of the truth of those articles wherein they concur. And this is our ordinary method of judging in all matters depending on human testimony. That Jerom, who probably spoke from memory, though certain as to the main point, might be somewhat doubtful as to the precise time of the abolition of the custom, is rendered even probable by his mentioning, with a view to mark the expiration of the practice, two successive bishops rather than one. For if he had known certainly that it ended with Heracla, there would have been no occasion to mention Dionysius; and if he had been assured of its continuance to the time of Dionysius, there would have been no propriety in mentioning Heracla.

Some have inferred from a passage in Tertulian, that, however general the practice was in the second and subsequent centuries, of settling in every church all the three orders above explained, it was not universal. That in parishes, where there were but a few christians remotely situated from other churches, it was judged sufficient to give them a pastor or bishop only, and some deacons. The presbyters then being but a sort of assistants to the bishop, might not, in very small charges, be judged necessary. The thing is not in itself improbable, and the authority above-mentioned, before I had examined it, or  
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seen a more accurate edition, led me to conclude it real. But on examination I find, that what had drawn me and others into this opinion, was no more than a false reading of a sentence quoted in a former lecture. In some editions of Tertulian we read, (*De exhort. cast.*) “ Ubi ecclesi-  
“ astici ordinis non est consessus, et offert, et  
“ tinguat, sacerdos qui est ibi solus.” I need not urge that the expression is quite different in all the best manuscripts, and most correct editions : this being one of those glaring corruptions, which, after a careful perusal, betray themselves to an attentive reader of any penetration. The words, as I have now transcribed them, considered in connection with the subject treated in the context, have neither sense nor coherence in them, whereas nothing can be more apposite to the author’s argument than they are in the way formerly quoted, “ Ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non  
“ est consessus et offers, et tinguis, et sacerdos  
“ es tibi solus.” So sensible of this were the two learned critics, Petavius and Dodwell, that though both were violently disposed in their different ways to pervert the meaning, neither thought proper to avail himself of a variation in the reading, which would have removed at once what to them was a great stumbling-block. It is indeed a reading which savours more of art than of negligence, and has much the appearance  
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of those inquisitorial corrections which were made on several antient books in the sixteenth century, especially those published in the papal dominions, or where the holy office was established, in order to adapt the antient doctrine to the orthodoxy of the day. Now nothing could be more opposite to this, than what seemed to admit, that any necessity or exigence whatever could entitle a layman to exercise the functions of a priest.—But this by the way.

The opinion of Dr. Hammond, (Annotations, Acts xi, 30,) that the apostles instituted only the office of bishop and deacon, and that the intermediate office of presbyter was soon afterwards introduced, is not materially different from the doctrine which I endeavoured, in a preceding lecture, to prove from the New Testament. Provided it be allowed, that the ministry, according to the apostolical arrangement, consisted of two orders, and not of three, the one properly the ministry of the word, the other the ministry of tables, it would be no better than logomachy, or altercation about words, to dispute whether the minister of the former kind should be called bishop, or presbyter, since it is evident, that these names were used synonymously by the inspired writers. Were we to be confined to one term, I should readily admit, that the first is the more proper of the two. The  
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name ἐπισκοπῆς, bishop, inspector, strictly expresses the charge of a flock; the term πρεσβυτέρῳ, presbyter, elder, senator, is a title of respect which has been variously applied. And in the ecclesiastic use it has been rendered ambiguous, by having been so long misapplied to a kind of subordinate ministry, which the true presbyterian maintains, with Jerom, was not from the beginning in the church. The only material difference between the doctor's sentiments and mine, on this article, is the following. That very learned and pious author, misled, as I imagine, more by the dialect of ecclesiastic writers, when the distinction had actually obtained, than by the practice of the primitive church, rightly understood, maintains that there was no more than one bishop or pastor allotted to every church, whereás, in my judgment, there were allotted several. Nothing can be more incompatible than his opinion, in this particular, with the style of the sacred penmen, to which, in support of that opinion, he is perpetually doing violence in his commentary. Admitting that the phrases καὶ ἐκκλησιαν, and καὶ πόλιν, may be rendered, as he affirms, *church by church*, and *city by city*, and that consequently what is called, in the common translation, "ordaining elders or bishops in every city, or in every church," may be understood to imply one in each, what shall be said of  
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the many passages not in the least ambiguous, wherein mention is made of the pastors in the plural number of but one church? Sometimes they are denominated bishops, sometimes presbyters, sometimes those that are over them, their guides or directors in the Lord. Indeed, what we are told, (Acts xx, 17,) that Paul sent from Miletus to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church, might (if there were not another passage to this purpose) serve as a sufficient confutation of that hypothesis. “Ay but,” replies our annotator, “by the church is here meant not the “single church of the city of Ephesus, but the “metropolitan church of Asia.” Is it possible, that a man of Dr. Hammond’s erudition and discernment, should have been so little acquainted with, or attentive to, the idiom not only of all the inspired, but of all the ecclesiastical, writers of the two first centuries, as, in support of his interpretation, to recur to such an unexampled phraseology? Where will he find all the churches of a province or country called the church of a particular city? But if there were nothing incongruous in the phrase, there is an absurdity in the supposition. How could the apostle expect to find at Ephesus all the bishops of Asia? Or was he, though in so great haste to get to Jerusalem before Pentecost, that he could not conveniently go to Ephesus himself, was he, I say, to wait  
till

till expresses were sent thence by the metropolitan throughout that extensive region, and till, in consequence of this summons, all the Asiatic bishops were convened at Miletus? By this strange way of wresting the plainest words, the saints at Philippi (p. 1, 1,) are in another place made to mean all the christians in Macedonia; and, by parity of reason, I acknowledge, the bishops and deacons of Philippi are all those in the holy ministry throughout the Macedonian kingdom. But as amplification does not always answer, the opposite method is sometimes found convenient.

+ When James (Jam. v, 14,) enjoins the sick person to send for the elders of the church, he means, according to our learned doctor, the elder, bishop, or pastor, of that particular flock. What sentiments might not the words of Scripture be made to favour, by this loose and arbitrary mode of interpreting? It is strange that one, whose discernment and impartiality, notwithstanding his prejudices, led him to discover that, in the sacred writings, there was no distinction between bishop and presbyter, was not able to discover (what was fully as evident) that they contained not a single vestige of metropolitanical primacy. The language of the fathers of the fourth and succeeding centuries, (for then all these degrees were firmly rooted) concerning the offices of Timothy and Titus, and the current maxim,

maxim, "one church, one bishop," which naturally sprang from the distinction of bishop and presbyter, had entirely warped this interpreter's judgment in every case wherein the subject of the ministry was concerned.

I must beg leave to add, that if what this gentleman and I are both agreed in, that there was originally no intervening order between bishop and deacon, be admitted to be just, the account given above, of the rise of such an order, has, abstracting from its external evidence, the advantage of his in respect of internal probability. That a middle order (as that of presbyter is in the church of England, and the church of Rome) was, notwithstanding the silence of history, erected at once immediately after the times of the apostles, is, to say the least, much more unlikely, than that it arose gradually out of an inconsiderable distinction, which had obtained from the beginning, Dodwell's hypothesis, that all those ordained by the apostles were no more than presbyters, in his acceptation of the term, labours under the like defect with Hammond's. It is very remarkable, that these two strenuous defenders of episcopacy do, in effect, both renounce its apostolical origin, admitting no subordination among the ministers of the word in the churches planted by the apostles; and that they do not differ more widely from their allies in this cause,

than they do from one another. It is a shrewd presumption, that a system is ill-founded, when its most intelligent friends are so much divided about it; and in order to account for it, recur to hypotheses so contradictory. A presumption too, let me add, that their judgment would lead them soon to adopt the premises of their adversaries, to which they sometimes approach very near, if their passions would allow them to admit the conclusion.

Thus we have advanced from the perfect equality, in respect of ministerial powers, in the stated pastors of the churches, planted by the apostles, to that parochial episcopacy which immediately succeeded it; and which, though it arose gradually from an inconsiderable cause, seems to have assumed the model of a proper episcopate, as the word is now understood, before the middle of the second century. And this I consider as the first step of the hierarchy. I shall continue to trace its progress in the succeeding lectures on this subject.



## LECTURE VIII.

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I SHOULD not have thought it necessary to be so particular as I have been, in ascertaining the nature of that polity which obtained in the primitive church, both in the simple form wherein it was first settled by the apostles, and in that which it soon after assumed, and almost universally retained, till the expiration of the third century, were not this a matter, that is made a principal foundation of dissent by a pretty numerous sect in this country. I do not here allude to those amongst us, who barely prefer the episcopal form of government, whom, in general, as far as I have had occasion to know them, I have found moderate and reasonable in their sentiments on this subject. Such do not pretend that the external model of the church (whatever they may think of the antiquity of theirs) is of the essence of religion. They are sensible, that an ecclesiastical polity, however necessary, is but a subsidiary establishment, totally distinct from the spiritual and vital principle, or the religion pro-

perly so called, for whose preservation and advancement it is calculated; that the merits of any form can be judged of only from its fitness for answering the end; that in this as in all other matters of experience, different times and different places may require some differences.

The notion that it was the intention of the apostles, that the particular mould which they gave the church should be held inviolable, or that it was their doctrine, that the continuance of the same mould is essential to the being of the church, appears to me not indeed problematical, but utterly incredible. One might have justly expected in that case (the matter being of such infinite consequence) a fuller and clearer account not only of what they did in this way, but also of their doctrine in relation to its importance. I shall add a few observations for the further support of the general point regarding the merits of the question.

As to the origin of one of the offices, that of deacon, it is related in such a manner as bears all the marks of a prudential expedient, suggested by a present inconvenience. The office too, on its first erection, was a trust in things merely temporal; or what Jerom, not unjustly, though perhaps too contemptuously, called, the service of tables and widows. They were no other than what, in modern language, we should call

call the church's almoners. Nor is it any objection to this representation, that we find both Stephen and Philip, who were among the seven deacons, that were first presented by the people to the apostles, exercising spiritual functions, such as preaching and baptizing. This power they certainly did not derive from the superintendency of the people's charities, to which alone they were chosen, with which they were entrusted; and which the apostles, in the very institution of the office, expressly distinguish from the ministry of the word. "It is not reason," said they, when harassed by the murmurs of the Hellenists against the Hebrews, on account of the supposed neglect of their widows, "that we should leave  
 " the word of God, and serve tables. Where-  
 " fore, brethren, look ye out among you seven  
 " men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost  
 " and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this  
 " business. But we will give ourselves continu-  
 " ally to prayer, and to the ministry of the  
 " word." Here the *διακονια τραπεζων*, and the *διακονια λογυ*, are manifestly contrasted to each other. Stephen and Philip, on the contrary, derived their spiritual functions, either from that title with which, according to Tertullian and the deacon Hilarius, every qualified person, in that state of the church, was invested for promoting the common cause, or from the supernatural

gifts they had received for the advancement of the faith, before their election to the diaconry, or (as some have thought most probable) from their being called of God to the office of evangelists. Philip is, in another place, but at a later period, expressly called an evangelist, Acts xxi, 8. It is worthy of notice, that his office of deacon is there also named, that we may not confound them, or ascribe to the one what belonged to the other. We entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven. Though it might be unsuitable, when the number of believers was greatly increased, to an office of so much weight as the apostleship, to be encumbered with a charge of this nature, it might not be incompatible with any office (like that of evangelist) of less importance. But soon after the apostolic age, (or perhaps sooner) though, by the way, we have no direct information concerning it, the deacons were admitted to assist in the inferior parts of the sacred service. At present, indeed, in almost all the churches where the three orders of bishop, presbyter, and deacon, are found, the last mentioned has no sort of charge in that particular which at first was his whole charge, and which alone gave occasion for the institution of the office; inasmuch that we cannot say that the modern deacon is in any respect the same with the apostolic deacon,



deacon; unless it be in the name. Properly the original charge of the institution, of which we are informed Acts vi, 1, is abolished, though the name be retained, and applied to an office totally distinct. At present the oversight of the poor belongs, in England, to the church-wardens, who are annually elected in each parish by the vestry. The deacons have no concern in it. In other churches, other methods are adopted:

There was another office also in the primitive church from the times of the apostles, which was conferred on elderly women, commonly widows, that of deaconess. Like the former, it did not belong to the ministry of the word, but to that of tables, and seems to have been devised for the discharge of certain charitable services to strangers and to the female poor, which could not be so properly performed by the deacons. That it was of apostolic institution, though we be not informed of the occasion and manner, there is no ground to doubt, since mention is made of it in the New Testament. *Phiebe* is denominated by Paul, Rom. xvi, 1, “a deaconess, *εστὶν διακονοῦσα*, of the church in Cenchrea.” And the directions given in the fifth chapter of the first epistle to Timothy have always been considered, and with great appearance of reason, as regarding those women who were proper to be admitted to this function. Yet this is an office

which has now, for many centuries, been universally disused.

What is truly of divine right in this whole matter of polity is, in my judgment, plainly this, that those important and divine lessons, which have been transmitted to us by the pastors who preceded us, should by us be committed to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also; and that as much as possible every thing should be done for the advancement of the knowledge, the faith, and the obedience of the Gospel. This is, doubtless, a duty incumbent on the church and her governours to the end of the world.

But though it be admitted, that a ministry is essential to the church, there are many things regarding the form of the ministry which must be accounted circumstantial. For my own part, I acknowledge it to be my opinion, that there is not a church now in the world which is on the model of that formed by the apostles. The circumstances of men and things are perpetually varying in respect of laws, civil polity, customs, manners; these, in every society, give rise to new regulations, arrangements, ceremonies: these, again, insensibly introduce changes in the relations of different classes and ranks of men one to another, exalting some, and depressing others. Sometimes alterations arise from a sort  
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of necessity. A particular measure may be expedient at one time and in certain circumstances, which is inexpedient at another time and in different circumstances. But it is equally certain on the other hand, that changes do not always spring from prudential considerations of fitness. As little can we say that they are always for the better. They more frequently result from the unbridled passions of men, favoured by circumstances and opportunity.

From what hath been said above, therefore, let it not be imagined, that I consider the outward form of polity, because not of the essentials of religion, as a matter absolutely indifferent. That, I imagine, would be an error in the other extreme. To recur to an illustration I formerly employed, though the house in which a man lodges make no part of his person, either of his body or of his soul, one house may prove a very comfortable and convenient lodging, and another so incommodious as to be scarcely habitable. Under whatever form of ecclesiastic polity a man lives, it will still hold an infallible truth, that if he believe and obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, he shall be saved. But certain it is, that one model of church government may be much better calculated for promoting that belief and obedience than another. Nay, it is not impossible that such changes may  
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be introduced, as are much more fitted for obstructing the influence of true religion than for advancing it; nay, for inspiring a contrary temper, and nourishing the most dangerous vices. How far this proved the case with the christian community is submitted to every judicious student of ecclesiastic history.

I now proceed in the brief detail of changes which ensued. In my last discourse on this subject, I brought the history of the ecclesiastic polity as far down as the end of the third century. I observed, that the government which then very generally prevailed, might justly be denominated a parochial episcopacy. The bishop, who was properly the pastor, had the charge of no more than one parish, one church or congregation, the parishioners all assembling in the same place with him for the purposes of public worship, religious instruction, and the solemn commemoration of the death of Christ; that in all these the bishop commonly presided; that each congregation almost universally had also a college of presbyters, who were more or less in number, as the exigencies of the parish required; that these constituted the bishop's council in judicial and deliberative matters, and his assistants in the performance of religious functions, both in public and in private. And when the bishop was detained by sickness, or was otherwise

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wise necessarily absent, they supplied his place. He was also attended by those called deacons, who, beside the care of the public charities, assisted in some of the inferiour offices of religion, as in distributing the sacramental elements in the eucharist, in making the preparations necessary for baptism, and other the like services. Sometimes these also were specially empowered by the bishop to baptize, and even to preach. The pastor, with his colleagues the presbyters, (for so Cyprian frequently denominates them) and the deacons, constituted the presbytery, with the assistance of which, but not intirely without the people, in matters of principal concernment, he conducted the affairs of his church.

Fra Paolo Sarpi, of whom I gave you a character in a former lecture, speaking of the ancient government of the churches, affirms, after Jerom, that in the beginning they constituted so many aristocracies, governed by the council of their respective presbyteries, among the members whereof there subsisted a perfect parity; that afterwards, in order the more effectually to obviate the divisions which sprang up, the monarchical form came to be adopted. The superintendency of the whole was given to the president or bishop, to whom all the orders of the church were bound to submit. It is to be observed, that he speaks not of the church universal, but

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of individual churches or congregations. As to the government of the whole christian commonwealth, I shall have occasion to consider it afterwards. But even in the original form of government in single parishes, it was not, as Sarpi seems to signify, a pure aristocracy, but rather a mixture of the two forms, the aristocratical and the democratical; for in some matters at least, as I observed before, nothing was done without the consent of the people, not declared by representatives, but by themselves, assembled in a collective body. And even when afterwards it came to assume more of the monarchical form, it was not, at least till after the middle of the third century, as we learn from Cyprian's letters, an unmixed monarchy, but a monarchy limited, and checked by the mixture it still retained of the two other sorts of government, the one in the presbytery, the other in the congregation. Hitherto, however, it held, with but a few exceptions, towards the end of the aforesaid period, that to one bishop there was only one parish, one church, one altar or communion-table, (for both names were used) one baptistery, and though there were several presbyters, the parish was undivided, each of them belonged equally to the whole, and was, in the discharge of his functions, at the direction of the bishop.

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The first thing that next deserves our notice, is to inquire from what causes it proceeded, that one bishop came to have the oversight of many congregations, and that the several presbyters came to have their several parishes, every congregation having its own church, altar, and baptistery, as well as pastor or presbyter, to whose care the smaller parish, or subdivision of the larger one, was peculiarly allotted, they all continuing still in subordination to the bishop, who was acknowledged their common head.

We have seen already, that in the first planting of churches, (however wonderful the progress which the apostles made may justly be accounted) as the disciples bore but a small proportion compared with the unconverted Jews and Heathens, the tract of country, that would be necessary to yield but a middling congregation, must have been of pretty large extent. The extent for some time would occasionally be enlarged, by the accession of new converts in neighbouring places, where there were none before. This would frequently cause an increase not only to the number of people in the congregation, but also to the territory of the parish. As additions were made gradually to this profession, by the diffusion of christian knowledge to places it had not reached before, the method which would naturally occur would be, to annex  
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the converts, where they were but few, to the parish that lay nearest. It would be only when considerable acquisitions were made all at once to the christian cause in remoter places, where formerly there had been few or none, that the notion of new erections would suggest itself. And that in the purest and simplest times, (before vanity or avarice had insinuated themselves) recourse was had to this method of erecting new parishes, the *χωρεπισκοποι*, country bishops, mentioned by ecclesiastic writers, is an undoubted evidence. But what would make people in most cases recur rather to the other method, is the consideration of the plurality of presbyters they had in every church. As in this they were not confined to a set number, but had more or fewer, as the exigencies of the parish required, they would, when the charge grew greater, think it necessary to add to the number of the presbyters, in order to prevent its becoming burdensome.

Further; it is no reflection on the church in general, or even on the pastors in particular, to suppose, that however sincere their zeal for the cause of Christ might be, as it undoubtedly was with a very great majority, they would not be intirely superiour to considerations either of interest or of ambition, when such considerations were not opposed by motives of a higher nature. Now as the pastors were supported by the  
voluntary



voluntary contributions of the people, of which the bishop had a fixed proportion, the number and wealth of his people, and the extent of his parish, added both to his importance and to his interest. Indeed, it would be impossible otherwise to account for it, that because in a large city, when only one congregation of christians could be collected, they had but one bishop, they should continue to have but one, when there were more christians in it than would be sufficient to constitute forty, fifty, or a hundred congregations. This, at the same time, strongly shows the influence of names and titles on mankind. The chief pastor had been distinguished; as was observed, from about the middle of the second century, by the title of bishop of such a city or town, suppose Rome, Alexandria, or Antioch, when he had only one congregation, and that perhaps a little one. But this congregation was collected not only from all parts of the city, but from the suburbs, and; probably, some of the nearest villages. This suggested the notion, that however much the number of the disciples might be increased, it would be unsuitable to his title, derogatory from his dignity, as well as hurtful to his interest, to cut off any part of the city, or suburbs, or suburban territory, which had always been considered as under his inspection before, and to which he seemed to have acquired

quired a right by prescription. It would have looked like a sort of degradation to make him exchange the title of bishop of Rome, or Alexandria, into bishop of such a street or lane.

It is indeed certain, that a pastor's charge is properly the people, not the place. It is accordingly styled *cura animarum*, the cure of souls. Nevertheless, there are several reasons, which contribute to make the territorial boundaries have more influence on the imagination in the notions of right, than the number of the people has. In the first place, the former are more easily ascertained than the latter. Those are permanent, these are perpetually changing. The people are denominated from the place, not the place from the people. Whatever revolutions come, the inhabitants of Rome will always be Romans, of Carthage, Carthaginians, and of Alexandria, Alexandrians. Add to this, that the restriction of a pastoral charge to a part of the former local precinct, would have withdrawn many people from that bishop, under whose care they had been, perhaps, the greater part of their lives. This would have had the appearance of an injury both to him and them too, if they esteemed him. But nobody could be considered as injured by the addition of numbers, who had no pastor at all before. That it is not a mere hypothesis, that sentiments of dignity and rank

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contributed to prevent a new partition, better suited to the circumstances that ensued, of districts which, with great propriety, had been called parishes, when each contained no more christians than were sufficient to compose a single congregation; appears from this, that in the canons afterwards established, it is assigned as a reason for the suppression of the *χωρεπισκοποι*, and for not ordaining, in time to come, bishops in villages and little towns, lest the episcopal name and authority should be brought into contempt. Such canons, however, were not always observed. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, more regardful of his master's service, than of any honours or profits he might derive from the extent of his charge, erected a bishopric at Fussala, a village in his diocese, as the bishop's charge came then to be denominated.

But to return to the first subdivision of the pastoral charge into smaller precincts, since called parishes, the name which had formerly belonged to the whole, there can be no doubt, that there had been instances of it in great cities long before the expiration of the third century; in some, perhaps, as Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, even before the expiration of the second; though it was far from being general till a considerable time after the third. Churches, or oratories, for the accommodation of the people, now that

these were too numerous to assemble as formerly in one place, began to be built, at first only in the remoter parts of the parish. They were then no more than what we call chapels of ease, and scarcely so much. They had not yet fixed presbyters of their own, but got occasionally sometimes one, sometimes another sent them, from the mother church, which was the parish church, to preside in the religious service, among those who assembled in these chapels, or conventicles, as they were also called, for it was not a name of reproach then. Still, however, the idea so much prevailed, that where there was but one bishop, there was properly but one congregation, and ought to be but one altar, that as far down as the beginning of the fifth century, pope Innocent the first, as appears from his epistles, wherein he mentions his sending the eucharistical bread to the presbyters officiating in those subordinate churches, assigns this for his reason, that they might not, on such occasions, consider themselves as separated from his communion. It had been chiefly in the century immediately preceding, when the christian religion was legally established as the religion of the empire, and when, through the concurrence of secular with spiritual motives, there came to be an immense accession of people to the church, that there was a necessity for building so great a number of  
of



of chapels, or *tituli*, as, in the Latin churches, they were, for distinction's sake, at first denominated. And hence the English phrase *to have a title*, when used of one who has obtained a presentation to a parish.

But as changes must be gradual not to shock those sentiments to which men have been long habituated, they could not, at first, have any notion of the propriety of settling, in these chapels, presbyters to officiate constantly, at their appointed times of meeting. This could not fail to look too much like what they had been always taught to consider as the principal outward badge of schism, cutting off a part from the rest of the congregation, separating, as it were, the members from the head, assigning them pastors different from the bishop, presbyters, who, when allotted to particular charges, could not remain in the same immediate dependence on the bishop as formerly, or in the like intimate connection with the presbytery.

Gradually, however, the sense of obvious convenience wore off their prejudices; and, first in the suburban villages at the greatest distance, a single presbyter was assigned to every chapel as their minister. The chapels in the city long continued to be supplied occasionally from the mother church, or bishop's church, according to any arrangement he thought proper to adopt.

Hence arose a distinction between city presbyters and country presbyters. The former were, more properly, of the bishop's council, and the latter, as having their fixed charges in the country, were not entitled to officiate in the city, unless by special desire. At length the custom crept into the cities also, from the sense of its manifest conveniency. Alexandria, by Epiphanius's account, with which Sozomen's agrees, was the first wherein every church or chapel had its own ministers or chaplains, one presbyter, and one or more deacons, as its extent and necessities seemed to require. In Rome, the practice, though not so early, appears to have been, to give two presbyters to every chapel or titulus. It were easy, if necessary, to give a still stronger confirmation of this account, from the vestiges that yet remain of christian antiquities in most countries of Europe. I shall only instance in England, and, for this purpose, adduce some quotations from Burn's Ecclesiastical Law, a book universally and justly held a standard on the subject whereof it treats, and in which the author has been careful to support, by the best authorities, whatever he advances. On the article *cathedral*, he affirms, "The cathedral church is the parish church of the whole diocese, (which diocese was therefore commonly called *parochia* in ancient times, till the application of this name

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“ to the lesser branches into which it was divided,  
“ made it, for distinction's sake, to be called  
“ only by the name of *diocese* :) and it hath  
“ been affirmed, with great probability, that if  
“ one resort to the cathedral church to hear  
“ divine service, it is a resorting to the parish  
“ church, within the natural sense and meaning  
“ of the statute.” Again, on the word *appropriation*, he has these remarks :—“ For the first  
“ six or seven centuries, the *parochia* was the  
“ diocese, or episcopal district, wherein the  
“ bishop and his clergy lived together at the  
“ cathedral church; and whatever were the  
“ tithes and oblations of the faithful, they were  
“ all brought into a common fund, from whence  
“ a continual supply was had for support of the  
“ bishop, and his college of presbyters and dea-  
“ cons, and for the repair and ornaments of the  
“ church, and for other suitable works of piety  
“ and charity. So that before the distribution  
“ of England into parishes, (as the word is now  
“ used) all tithes, offerings, and ecclesiastical  
“ profits whatsoever, did entirely belong to the  
“ bishop and his clergy for pious uses. This  
“ community and collegiate life of the bishop  
“ and his clergy, appears to have been the prac-  
“ tice of our British, and was again appointed  
“ for the model of our Saxon churches. While  
“ the bishops thus lived amongst their clergy,  
“ residing

“residing with them in their proper seats, or  
“cathedral churches, the stated services, or  
“public offices of religion, were performed only  
“in those single choirs, to which the people of  
“each whole diocese resorted, especially at the  
“more solemn times and seasons of devotion.  
“But to supply the inconveniencies of distant  
“and difficult access, the bishops sent out some  
“presbyters into the remoter parts to be itine-  
“rant preachers, or occasional dispensers of the  
“word and sacraments. Most of these mis-  
“sionaries returned from their holy circuit to  
“the centre of unity, the episcopal college, and  
“had there only their fixed abode, giving the  
“bishop a due account of their labours and  
“successes in their respective progress. Yet  
“some few of the travelling clergy, where they  
“saw a place more populous, and a people  
“zealous, built there a plain and humble con-  
“veniency for divine worship, and procured the  
“bishop to consecrate it for an *oratory*, or  
“chapel at large, not yet for a parish church,  
“or any particular congregation, to be confined  
“within certain bounds and limits. And while  
“the necessities of the country were thus upon  
“occasion supplied, it did not alter the state of  
“ecclesiastical patrimony, which still remained  
“invested in the bishop, for the common uses  
“of religion. The division of a diocese into  
“rural



“ rural parishes, and the foundation of churches  
“ adequate to them, cannot be ascribed to any  
“ one act, nor indeed to any one single age.  
“ Several causes and persons did contribute to  
“ the rise of the parochial churches.” Then  
follows an enumeration of the principal causes.  
Once more on the word parish :—“ At first there  
“ were no parochial divisions of cures here in  
“ England, as there are now. For the bishops  
“ and their clergy lived in common ; and before  
“ that the number of christians was much in-  
“ creased, the bishops sent out their clergy to  
“ preach to the people as they saw occasion.  
“ But after the inhabitants had generally em-  
“ braced christianity, this itinerant and occa-  
“ sional going from place to place was found  
“ very inconvenient, because of the constant  
“ offices that were to be administered, and the  
“ people not knowing to whom they should re-  
“ sort for spiritual offices and directions. Here-  
“ upon the bounds of parochial cures were  
“ found necessary to be settled here by those  
“ bishops, who were the great instruments of  
“ converting the nation from the Saxon idola-  
“ try. At first they made use of any old British  
“ churches that were left standing, and after-  
“ wards, from time to time, in successive ages,  
“ churches were built and endowed by lords of  
“ manors and others, for the use of the inhabi-

“ tants of their several manors or districts, and,  
“ consequently, parochial bounds affixed there-  
“ unto. And it was this which gave a primary  
“ title to the patronage of laymen; and which  
“ also, oftentimes, made the bounds of a parish  
“ commensurate to the extent of a manor.” I  
have been the fuller in these quotations, as I  
thought it of consequence to produce the senti-  
ments of a learned divine of the church of Eng-  
land, who is, besides, a celebrated jurist and  
christian antiquary, that it might be evident to  
every impartial inquirer, that the account I have  
given is not the misrepresentation of a party,  
but strictly conformable to the judgment of the  
most candid and best informed of opposite par-  
ties. I return to the general state of things in  
the empire, on the establishment of the christian  
religion by Constantine.

When almost the whole people were proselyted  
to christianity, those chapels were so greatly  
multiplied, that it was no longer possible to sup-  
ply them all with the eucharist from the bishop's  
altar or communion-table. Then it was judged  
expedient to permit the erecting of other altars  
in those inferiour churches, wherein the presby-  
ters settled as pastors in the subdivisions, or  
smaller districts severally assigned to them,  
should officiate in consecrating the sacramental  
elements, and distributing them to the people.

Each

Each presbyter came to have a peculiar tie to the discharge of all pastoral duties to those allotted to him, such as baptizing, visiting the sick, instructing the catechumens, admonishing the irregular, public and private teaching, and giving testimonials to such as removed. In these, on account of the vast multiplicity which the change of circumstances had occasioned, it was impossible now, as formerly, that the bishop should be always consulted, or that the presbyters should always act by immediate direction. Every presbyter came to be considered as the pastor of the charge committed to him, and in every material respect as the same to his part of the parish, which the bishop had been to the whole. His charge itself came to be denominated *παροικία*, a parish, a name which, as I remarked before, had been uniformly given to the whole bishopric, whereof this was but a portion, and the latter began to be distinguished by the name *διοικησις*, diocese, though the distinction was not regularly observed till long afterwards. The names *κκλησία* and *ecclesia* came to be given universally to those meeting-houses as to proper parish-churches, and then the mother-church got the name cathedral, as there the throne of the bishop and the bench of the presbytery were erected,

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By the account given above, one would imagine, that in some things the power of the bishop was now impaired, though the number of his spiritual subjects was greatly multiplied. The presbyters had more authority in their respective flocks, and were not under the necessity, as formerly, of recurring always to his warrant or permission. When the charge became so extensive, and consequently burdensome, the bishops were obliged to sacrifice some of their prerogatives to the love of ease. But this sacrifice had, in effect, more the appearance of abridging their power than the reality. The change, upon the whole, tended much, in the eye of the world, to aggrandize the order. From being the pastor of a particular flock, he was become the superintendant of many pastors. Whereas formerly he had the charge of one parish and one congregation, for these terms are correlates, he had now the charge of, perhaps, fifty parishes and fifty congregations, comprized within the same compass. He was not so closely connected with the people as before, but that was solely because he was raised higher above them, his immediate connection being with their pastors. Besides, in respect of wealth, he drew great advantages from the increase of numbers, being entitled to the same proportion from the public contributions



tions of the whole diocese. Not to mention that the superstition, or mistaken piety of some wealthy converts, also contributed to the increase of his opulence. And if, in regard to most official duties, the presbyters did more of themselves in their several charges, they were totally excluded by canons from confirming and ordaining, which sufficiently secured their dependance and inferiority.

Add to this, that the separation of the presbyters from one another, by their being obliged to reside in their several parishes, and their having opportunity only when called for a particular purpose to come together, assisted the bishop in engrossing the jurisdiction in spiritual matters, which formerly belonged to the presbytery, or body of the pastors. And as in things temporal (which I showed in a former discourse) the judicial power had, before now, come entirely into his hands, the immense accession of people to his jurisdiction added immensely to his importance. And if the aristocratical part of church government was greatly diminished, the democratical was totally subverted. The impossibility there was, that business should be managed by the people of a diocese collectively, when they amounted, as in several bishoprics, to some hundred thousands, put an end, in matters of discipline, to their pretensions. The only  
vestige.

vestige that remained of their former rights was, that in several places they continued to assemble tumultuously at the election of a bishop. But as this affair was generally conducted with riot and clamour, and sometimes ended in blood, the principles of sound policy required, that a practice so fruitful of bad consequences, and so barren of good, should be abolished. It was not now, as formerly, a single congregation choosing their own pastor, who was to have the immediate charge of their spiritual instruction and guidance, but it was a mob, often a most outrageous one, collected from a whole diocese or province, to nominate a great man, better known by his extensive jurisdiction and splendid titles, than by any pastoral duties he had to exercise.

The train in which things were now put, gave rise to a new application of the word *ἐκκλησία*. I observed that this term had before been always used to denote either a single congregation, or the whole christian community. When the bishop's charge was no more than a single congregation, it was very proper to denominate it by that name, and call it a church in the singular number. Now that the term had, for ages, been employed to express all that was under the inspection of one bishop, and that people were inured to such phrases as these, the church of Antioch,

Antioch, the church of Cesarea, the church of Constantinople, and the church of the bishop of Antioch, &c., the word continued to be so applied, notwithstanding the change of circumstances, in consequence of which many congregations came to be included. This paved the way for extending still farther the import of the term, and employing it in the singular number, to denote all the churches of a province under the same metropolitan, or even of one or more kingdoms under the same patriarch.

It may not, however, be improper to remark, that for several ages there remained here and there the traces of the footing on which things had formerly stood. In small and distant towns and villages, wherein bishops had been planted, and whereof the circumjacent country was but thinly peopled, the charge, even after the conversion of all the inhabitants, remained undivided, and the bishop was still no more than what every bishop was primitively, the pastor of a single congregation, with his assistant, presbyters, and deacons. But these changes, in process of time, gave place to still greater. When the division of ancient parishes, which I shall henceforth call *dioceses*, became universal, the principal reason for confining them within moderate bounds intirely ceased, and motives of interest and ambition operated the contrary way

without control. The immediate dependance of the people, and even of the clergy, upon the bishop, and the connection of ninety-nine parts in a hundred of the diocese with the bishop's church, formerly the parish-church, now the cathedral, being totally dissolved, and the people more commodiously supplied in every part of the religious services, worship, sacraments, and teaching, by those tituli, now called parish-churches, newly erected, there needed no more to abolish the presbytery, whose principal use subsisted no longer. The diocese accordingly underwent a new division into deaneries, so named from their including at first ten parishes, or ten presbyters in each, though they did not long confine themselves to that number. The president, called *decanus*, the dean, is properly an arch-presbyter, such as anciently, in the bishop's absence, presided in the presbytery. The deanery of the cathedral, consisting of the clergy, whose duty it is to perform there the sacred service, and to preach, is denominated *capitulum*, the chapter, being, as it were, the head of the clergy of the diocese. But the rural deaneries, as they answered little purpose, have, in most places, gone into disuse. The presbyters, who under the dean officiated in the mother-church, came to be distinguished from the parochial clergy by the titles of prebendaries and canons. The former



former name they derived from the appointments called prebends, to which they were entitled, the latter from the regulations to which they were subjected. The chapter served, instead of the presbytery, in matters of election, not only in electing the inferiour offices, but in supplying vacancies, in concurrence with the bishop, in the prebends or canonries and deanship; nay, that they anciently, on the decease or translation of the bishop, elected his successor, the *congé d'élire*, still in use in England, though now no better than a form, is a standing evidence. They had the superintendency of the fabric, with the goods and ornaments belonging to the cathedral, and were also guardians of what is now called the spiritualties of the bishopric, when the see was vacant.

In regard to the episcopal jurisdiction, which extended over the whole diocese, the chapter, consisting only of the clergy of the cathedral, could not be considered as a proper council. In the bishop's court of judicature, denominated the consistory, his counsellors and assessors in judgment when he was present, and delegates in his absence, were those called archdeacons. The archdeacon was originally of the order of deacons, as the name imports. There was but one of them in a diocese. He presided among those of his own order, was a constant attendant upon  
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the bishop, and was considered as his prime minister. But some time after, the partition of dioceses became very general, particularly after the country bishops were, through a jealousy that they would lessen the dignity of the order, suppressed by canon, and their parishes annexed to those of the next city bishops, it was found convenient to elect those delegates, the archdeacons, from the order of the presbyters, and to have more or fewer in a diocese, according to its extent. Through the influence of custom, in opposition to propriety, the name *archdeacon* was retained. The diocese was accordingly divided into archdeaconries, and these subdivided into deaneries, not unlike the division of counties, that obtains in England into hundreds and tithings. It was then judged expedient to invest archdeacons with a share of episcopal jurisdiction, both in temporals and in spirituals, within their archdeaconries, where they perform regular visitations, like the bishops, hold spiritual courts, either in person or by their deputies, called officials, and are accounted dignitaries. The only acts peculiar to the bishop are confirming and ordaining.

I have been the more particular in this deduction, in order to give at once a faint sketch of the model which, in a great measure, still subsists in England and Ireland, and among the secular

secular clergy of the church of Rome. The variations, indeed, are considerable, which the influence of time and local customs have produced in different places. A perfect uniformity in these things is not to be expected. We are now arrived at the second step of the hierarchy, when prelacy or diocesan episcopacy succeeded the parochial, and began generally to prevail.

## LECTURE IX.

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IN my last lecture, I traced the origin of prelacy, or diocesan episcopacy. I shall now, ere I proceed, for the further illustration of the subject, contrast the two methods that might naturally be supposed to have suggested themselves, upon the great revolution in circumstances which the establishment of christianity by the imperial laws, and the numerous conversions from paganism consequent thereon, occasioned in the church. There was then, indeed, an absolute necessity to make a considerable alteration in the arrangement which had subsisted formerly, in order that such multitudes of people might be supplied with pastors, and with the ordinances of religion. One way of answering this end was to attempt anew the division of christian countries into such parishes, as were no more than necessary for affording each a sufficient congregation, and to give each, as formerly, its own bishop, presbyters, and deacons, independently of every other parish. In this way, indeed,



deed, there would have been vast alterations made on the territories and local extent of pastoral charges, which would have had the appearance of dispossessing, in a great measure, those then actually in office. But the form, as well as the spirit, of the model adopted in the second century, would have remained. And, indeed, this was the only possible method whereby it could have remained unimpaired.

The other way was to preserve the same division of territory that had been made so long before, and which the people, through custom, were brought to regard as sacred, to continue the same nominal parishes in the same hands, but in order also to accommodate the parishioners without overloading the pastors, to increase the number of the presbyters, and as they could not now all convene in one place, to erect a sort of subordinate chapels or churches, (a thing in the two first centuries probably not conceived) to affix to each in subordination to the prelate its proper presbyter, who in most things was to be, in respect of this smaller parish, what the bishop had been in respect of the larger parish whereof it was a part. If the former of these methods suited more the primitive constitution of the church, the latter (which in fact was adopted) was more accommodated to the natural bent of the imagination. It had the appearance of pay-

ing a proper regard to ancient land-marks, of accommodating the people without injuring individuals; by stripping them both of the titles and of the territories, which had been immemorially possessed by them and their predecessors.

Besides, though the accession of proselytes to the christian cause was both great and sudden on the establishment of christianity as the religion of the empire, there had been a real, though more gradual accession, for centuries before. And as this, through its being gradual, had never given rise to any new division, but, perhaps, in a few distant places, to the erection of country-parishes, under the care of those called chorepiscopi, or to the addition of some presbyters to the bishop's council, they would be prepared by custom to adopt the second method rather than the first. I have hinted already, that both interest and ambition pointed to the same conduct. I might add another thing, which has no inconsiderable influence on our apprehensions of fitness, that a certain analogy to the civil government would also contribute to recommend this plan. How far this principle operated on the advancement of the hierarchy to the grandeur, which in process of time it attained, as it is admitted by every judicious and candid historian, shall be evinced more fully in the sequel.

Thus

Thus a circumstance in itself merely accidental, and which we have reason to think was not regarded as of any moment by the first publishers of the gospel, namely, the extent of territory that was necessary for affording converts enow to make a congregation, (this circumstance, I say) aided by some concurring causes, proved the secret source of that total change, in respect to government, which the church in a few ages after underwent. Some of those concurrent causes have been explained already, and we shall have occasion to investigate others of them as we proceed. But that we may, if possible, be more fully satisfied of the truth of the foregoing remark, in regard to the rise of the dioceses, comprehending many congregations out of parishes, which, though generally the same, or nearly so, in local extent, comprehended each but one congregation; let us suppose that the apostles and other founders of the churches, instead of converting, as they did, a thirtieth, or a fortieth part of every city where they preached; had converted all the inhabitants, is it not manifest that the same principle of combining as many converts as would constitute a congregation, which made them include the whole city in the parish, when the whole could furnish no more than one congregation, would have led

them to erect as many parishes as there were streets or lanes, when each street or lane could afford the same number which, as things happened, were afforded by the whole city. Had this been the case from the beginning, such a revolution in the circumstances of the church as I have endeavoured to explain to you, could never have happened.

But I promised to advert briefly to some other causes, which concurred in producing the same effect. The more effectually to accomplish this promise, it will be necessary to turn back a little, that we may trace the origin and progress of ecclesiastic courts. I have had frequent occasion to mention the presbytery. It was the radical court, and subsisted from the beginning. Mention is made of it in Scripture. And as a plurality of pastors was settled in most christian congregations, planted by the apostles, and as those pastors were required to conduct their matters with harmony and prudence, there was a necessity that, for this purpose, they should often meet and consult together. This was properly the council of the congregation. And the different congregations, with their ministers, seemed, in a great measure, independent of one another. Every thing regarding their own procedure in worship, as well as discipline, was  
settled



settled among themselves. But it is extremely plain, that a total independency was not adapted to the more general character that belonged to all as members of the commonwealth of Christ. It was not the being members of the same congregation that constituted their christian brotherhood and unity, but the being all, through one Mediator, adopted as children into the family of God, or, as it is otherwise expressed, the being members of the same body whereof Christ is the head, and, consequently, all members one of another. As Christ is not divided, as his cause and interests will ever be the same, it was not less expedient for maintaining union, and consequently charity, through the whole christian fraternity, that the churches should preserve a proper correspondence and intercourse with one another, than it was necessary for preserving the peace and harmony of a congregation, that there should be a settled order among them for conducting the religious ordinances, and for consulting, deliberating, and determining, in all matters of common concern.

That such a union in every thing essential to the cause, was what the apostles had much at heart, is very plain not only from the strain of their writings, but from the measures they took to get the same rule universally to prevail in re-

lation to the great dispute that, in their time, was so hotly agitated about circumcision, and the other ceremonies of the law. The rule which, in consequence of the consultation holden at Jerusalem, was unanimously established by the apostles, elders, and brethren there assembled, at the same time that it tended to unite the disciples in love, and in the observance of every thing essential, breathed a spirit of forbearance and toleration in matters merely circumstantial, that bears but little resemblance to the greater part of the ecclesiastical canons of later date.

This example, doubtless, suggested to the churches founded by the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, to devise some regular plan of intercourse with one another, in order the more effectually to promote unity and brotherly affection in the church universal. For this purpose the congregations, in the same canton or province, agreed to have stated conjunct meetings, wherein they might discuss those matters which were of general concern, concert the measures that would be necessary both for the propagation of the faith amongst idolaters, and for the defence of its purity from internal scandals and pernicious errors. Since it was impossible for the whole people of many churches to assemble thus for

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consultation, it would naturally occur, as being of practicable methods the most expedient, that the pastors and deacons, who in respect of office were most nearly concerned in the cause; should, together with a delegation from the people of the different congregations, convene in the most commodious place, and treat together of those matters that concerned the common salvation.

That in these, at first, the people had a share as well as the pastors, we have sufficient ground from primitive writers to believe. I shall mention but a few of the many authorities which, in support of this matter, might be produced. Eusebius, in the synodical epistle he has preserved in his history, b. vii, l. 30, from the assembly or synod at Antioch, which condemned Paulus Samosatenus, thus titles the persons (or rather represents them as titling themselves) who had concurred in that measure, ἐπισκοποι, καὶ πρεσβύτεροι, καὶ διακονοί, καὶ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ Θεοῦ; the bishops, and presbyters, and deacons, and the churches of God. When the term churches is thus contradistinguished from the pastors, it always denotes the people. Nor are some of these classes represented here as actors, and others only as spectators, or passive consenters. What was acted on this occasion, is exhibited as alike the action of all. *Ἡγαγκαθήμεν εὐ. κ. τ. λ.* “We were  
“ therefore under a necessity of expelling this  
“ adversary

“adversary of God, and settling another bishop  
“in his stead\*.”

I shall produce but one other authority, which is a letter to Cyprian, the 31st in his epistles, from the presbyters and deacons of Rome, in relation to the lapsed, wherein we find these words: “*Quanquam nobis in tam ingenti negotio placeat, quod et tu ipse tractasti prius; ecclesiae pacem sustinendam, deinde, sic collatione consiliorum cum episcopis, presbyteris, diaconis, confessoribus, pariter ac stantibus laicis facta, lapsorum tractare rationem.*” Here laymen, who had continued firm in times of persecution, are judged proper to be joined in council on this most important subject, with bishops, presbyters, deacons, and confessors, or those, whether laymen or clergymen, who had suffered for the testimony of Jesus. The same thing may also be evinced from the 14th and the 26th of his epistles, and from the account he

\* How trifling is the attempt to elude the force of this argument, by saying, that as to the inferiour orders and the people, this address ought to be considered as conveying only their salutations. The only place in a letter for complimentary salutations, is the end. The title bears always (and to this use it is appropriated) the designation of those by whom, and of those to whom the letter is sent. Here we perceive, as plainly as we can perceive any thing by the help of language, the different classes of persons abovementioned giving an account of their joint proceedings.

gives



gives of the African synod, holden at Carthage, for determining the question that had been raised about the rebaptization of heretics. To what purpose insist that those courts were often styled synods of bishops, and that the decisions are sometimes ascribed to the bishops, and no mention made of any other order. It is admitted, that this was the principal order, and at that time essential to the existence of a synod, which, probably, the other orders were not. Hence a synod might naturally be denominated a convention of bishops. It is admitted further, that there have been synods in which no other members were present. From neither of these concessions can we infer, in contradiction to direct testimony, that this was the case with all synods, and that none of any inferiour order had a voice among them, either legislative or judicial. In our church judicatories in Scotland, presbyteries, synods, and assemblies, (for church-sessionis consist mostly of the laity) the numbers of ministers and of laymen, who are constituent members, are nearly equal. Yet they are familiarly termed meetings of the clergy, and it sometimes happens, both in presbyteries and in synods, that none are present but ministers. They make a regular court notwithstanding; whereas lay-elders without ministers would not make an ecclesiastical judicatory. But to return.

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In the manner above explained, the churches maintained a mutual correspondence, consulting with one another in all matters of very great and general concernment, insomuch that there arose a sort of republic from the association of the churches in a particular province, which was, in a manner, governed by its council or synod. Some of these synods met annually, others twice a year, or even oftener, if occasion required. The divisions of the country made by the civil government were commonly adopted here, not as necessary, but as commodious, and affording opportunities on other accounts of assembling more frequently. The metropolis of the province, as being the most centric, or at least the most convenient, was the usual place of meeting; and the bishop of that place, from a sort of natural title to preside in the convention, came by the gradual, but sure operation of custom, to be regarded as the head of the body. Hence the bishop of the metropolis came very naturally to be denominated the metropolitan; and this term was, by consequence, understood to denote his presidency over the bishops of the province. This custom, however, did not obtain every where from the beginning. At first, the office of president seems generally to have been elective, and to have continued no longer than the session of the synod. Nor did it ever obtain

tain in the provinces of Africa, (except Africa propria, of which the bishop of Carthage was always metropolitan) nor of Numidia and Mauritania, for in these the honour of presidency was determined by seniority. The senior bishop was president of the synod, and head of the province. Accordingly with them he was denominated *primus*, primate, and not metropolitan. In this, however, the African churches remained singular. But even this singularity sufficiently confutes those vain patronizers of the hierarchy, who are absurd enough to derive the metropolitical primacy, as well as the patriarchal sovereignty from apostolical institution. Thus the presidency of this new dignitary over the bishops evidently sprang from the identical causes, which first raised the bishop above the presbyters, and not long after, as we shall see, subjected the metropolitans themselves.

For this fraternal intercourse was, in process of time, still further extended. As all the provinces within the same prefecture had a closer connection with one another, than those which happened to have different civil governours, and to be more disjoined, this communion, in respect of ecclesiastic polity, was enlarged, and councils were sometimes convened from all the churches within the prefecture, or at least the civil diocese, which gradually gave the bishop of the capital,

where the prefect had his residence, and kept his court, the like ascendant over the metropolitans, within the bounds of that jurisdiction, which the latter had obtained, from similar causes, over the bishops within their respective provinces. These prefectures were the imperial city of Rome, which presided over all the suburbiary provinces, as they were called; the city of Alexandria, which governed Egypt, Lybia, and Pentapolis; the city of Antioch, comprehending under it Syria, and other oriental provinces; the city of Jerusalem, comprehending Palestine and Arabia Petræa, originally and properly a part of the civil diocese of Antioch; and lastly, Constantinople, which being the seat of empire, came by degrees, through the favour of the emperors, to attain such extensive dominion, and high prerogatives, as to appear, for a while, a formidable rival, if not an overmatch for Rome herself. In the western dioceses of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, there seem to have been no patriarchs, though there were as many metropolitans as provinces, which were pretty numerous. Indeed, this want appears to have given the bishop of Rome, in after-ages, a great ascendant over them, the metropolitans being too inconsiderable to cope with him. The patriarchs were likewise called archbishops, though this denomination was also given to the primates, and even sometimes as an honorary



rary title to those who were but bishops. There were some other bishops of less note than the patriarchs, but superiour to the metropolitans, in those governments by the Greeks called eparchies, on whom the intermediate title and dignity of exarch were conferred. Thus the bishop of Ephesus was styled exarch of the Asiatic diocese, and the bishop of Cesarea, in Cappadocia, exarch of the Pontic. Now each of these comprehended ten or eleven provinces under their respective metropolitans, and each province a considerable number of bishoprics. But I do not intend to enter into minute particulars. Those I have named were the chief.

This polity having been gradually introduced, and established partly by custom, partly by imperial authority, received, according to some, the sanction of the first ecumenical council assembled at Nice, under Constantine, the first christian emperor, in which a canon (so the laws of the church are denominated) was enacted, making the subordination which then obtained perpetual. But there are who think, that that canon extended only to the power of metropolitans; for that the patriarchal, not having yet got firm footing, did not receive the sanction of the church till about fifty years afterwards. It is remarkable, that the very same powers which the bishops had claimed and acquired over the presbyters,

byters, were now first claimed and acquired by the metropolitans over the bishops, and soon after by the patriarchs over the metropolitans. The presbytery was the bishop's court, which he had the power of convening when he judged it proper, and wherein he presided. The same prerogatives were exercised by the metropolitan, in regard to the provincial synod, and by the patriarch, in regard to the diocesan council. And as to the power of convoking an ecumenical council, nothing is more evident than that, for some ages, it was claimed and exercised only by the emperor. Such a council or assembly was denominated ecumenical from the Greek word *οικουμενη*, the name then commonly given to the Roman empire. The charge of a presbyter was now called a parish, and that of the bishop a diocese; and sometimes, for distinction's sake, a smaller diocese, the district under the metropolitan's jurisdiction was named a province, and that under the patriarchs a larger diocese, being the same (or nearly so) with what was termed a *diocese* in the civil division of the empire. As the bishop claimed an exclusive title to ordain his presbyters, the same was challenged by the metropolitan, in regard to the consecration of the bishops of his province, and by the patriarch in the instalment of the metropolitans of his diocese. The umpirage exercised by the bishop in  
deter-

determining the differences that arose amongst his presbyters, came also to be exercised by the metropolitan over the bishops, and by the patriarch, or exarch, over the metropolitans. Thus there was an established scale of authority from the lowest orders in the church to the patriarchs, who were the highest, and who were the judges of all ecclesiastical matters in the last resort; for there obtained also a regular course of appeal from the inferiour to the superiour orders, as well as synods.

It may not be improper to take notice here in passing, that as the superiour orders, above mentioned, sprang up and grew into consideration in the church, there was also introduced, especially in the populous cities, a number of inferiour orders, by whose means the deacons were relieved of some of the more menial parts of the service, which had formerly, before they were grown so considerable, been required of them. Such were sub-deacons, acolytes, readers, singers, exorcists, janitors, and some others, for they were not the same in all churches. What cardinal Bona said of the inferiour orders may be justly said of all the orders, the two original ones (bishop and deacon) alone excepted. “*Contigit nimirum ecclesiæ quod hominibus solet, qui dum tenue patrimonium habent, uno servo contenti sunt, qui solus omnia administrat.*”

“ Si vero reditus augeantur, servorum etiam  
 “ augetur numerus; eoque magis crescit fami-  
 “ lia, quo illi locupletiores et spectabiliores eva-  
 “ dunt. Sic evangelicæ predicationis initio par-  
 “ vula adhuc et latitans ecclesia paucis indiguit  
 “ ecclesiasticarum functionum ministris. Cres-  
 “ cente autem credentium multitudine, et auctis  
 “ facultatibus, ex fidelium oblationibus, cum  
 “ soli diaconi non possent omnibus incumbere,  
 “ diversa onera et officia diversis personis dis-  
 “ tributa sunt; ex quo factum est ut splendi-  
 “ diori et augustiori apparatu ecclesiasticarum  
 “ functionum ceremoniæ peragerentur.” [De  
 Rebus Liturg. l. 1, c. xxv, § 17,] on which Bas-  
 nage remarks, “ Atque ex incremento ecclesiæ  
 “ non officia, sed ministri, crescere debuerunt.”

True. And if the increase of the church had  
 been solely in the number of believers, an in-  
 crease of ministers, and not of ministries, would  
 possibly have sufficed. But as there came also  
 a great accession of wealth and splendour to the  
*church* and *churchmen*, as the words are now  
 understood, a variety of offices or degrees was  
 requisite to suit the claims and expectations of  
 men of various conditions. Kings and princes  
 have not only many servants, but many offices  
 under them, adapted to men of different ranks.

But to return to the superiour orders. I do  
 not say that all the adjustments I have mentioned,



in regard to their respective privileges and authority, were observed uniformly and universally. There still remained considerable differences in the customs that obtained in different places. And it was hardly possible it should be otherwise, considering the manner in which this power arose. But the account given above is a just representation of what was, in the main, the state and constitution of the church, universal during part of the third, fourth, the fifth, and some successive centuries. There were no doubt many causes which cannot here be specified, that co-operated in raising this wonderful fabric of church-dominion, which was now become a kind of oligarchy, the administration whereof rested ultimately in the patriarchs. Among these causes none of the least was (as power always follows property) the vast accession of wealth, which, by the numerous conversions of pagans of high rank, accrued at last to the bishops of the principal cities.

When, in the fourth century, christianity, as we usually speak, became the religion of the empire, the like combination, of a still greater number of churches, and such as were more widely diffused through christendom, was effected with the assistance of the emperor. This last kind of congress was denominated a general or ecumenical council. Every one must perceive, that the

greater the number of churches was, from whom a deputation was required, the fewer deputies they could admit from each. The natural consequence of this would be, that when the christian community came to spread over an immense extent of territory, and to become very populous by the accession of multitudes of new proselytes, the privilege of representing the different congregations would come entirely into the hands of the pastors. Nay, even of these at last, especially in the diocesan synods and ecumenical councils, there would be found access for none but dignitaries. And in this manner the laity would come by degrees (as in fact it happened) to be entirely justled out. We cannot be surprized that, in consequence of this, a power which at first may be justly said to have been derived, should, in process of time, be accounted original, and that what in the beginning had been conferred by election, should at last be considered as inherent in particular offices.

From the imperfection of the ecclesiastic history of the first ages, it is impossible to trace the progress of usurpation through its various stages with all the clearness that could be wished. Enough, however, may be clearly discovered, when we compare the state of things in latter times with what we learn from the sacred records, and from the genuine undisputed remains of the  
apostolic

apostolic fathers, to satisfy us both of the reality and of the greatness of that usurpation.

There are very few, either protestants or papists, who with Baronius, and the other tools of ecclesiastic tyranny, pretend to assign to the metropolitical or patriarchal authority an apostolical original, yet there is not a single objection that can be raised against the feasibility of an acquisition of power in the bishops over the presbyters, that does not operate with at least equal force against the feasibility of such an acquisition in the metropolitans over the bishops, and in the patriarchs over the metropolitans; and, I may add, with equal reason, (as it came afterwards, in a great measure, to obtain) in the pope over the whole or greater part of the christian world. There is a gradation in the whole progress: the steps by which we ascend are exactly similar. Nor is the origin of any one part of the system more unaccountable than of another.

Many strenuous advocates for episcopacy do not admit, that there was originally any visible power in the church paramount to that of the bishops, who were all, in this respect, on a foot of perfect equality. There was no "episcopus "episcoporum," say they, no bishop of bishops, but Christ. Yet the fact is undeniable, that the jurisdiction of the metropolitans and primates,

which these men consider as mere usurpation, came, in a few centuries, very easily and universally to obtain; insomuch, that Dodwell's smart expostulation with the presbyterians may, without the smallest diminution of energy, be retorted upon himself. Change but the word *presbyterius* into *provinciis*, and the argument is the same. "Quid enim? Fatebuntur fuisse  
 " φιλόπρωτες, qui pares non ferrent, Pompeios?  
 " Nec interim agnoscent in provinciis fuisse  
 " Cæsares, priorum pariter impatientes?" *Will they acknowledge, that among so many Pompeys, who could endure no equal, there was not in the provinces one Cæsar, who could suffer no superiour?*  
 In fact, the rise of the bishop's power over the presbyters is more easily accounted for than that of the metropolitans over the bishops. The situation of things in the church was totally changed; and it could not be said now, as it might with truth of the second century, that as no secular end could be promoted, there was no rational motive to excite either avarice or ambition on the one side, and consequently to rouse jealousy on the other. An ascendant, which appeared to be the result merely of superiour zeal and virtue, and attended with more imminent danger, would not be warmly opposed, whilst worldly motives had hardly scope to operate.



If for our direction in forming a judgment concerning the persons who were originally, and seem to be naturally, entitled, to have a share in all consultations about church-affairs, we recur to the account given us in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, concerning the assembly convened at Jerusalem, on occasion of the dispute about circumcision, we can be at no loss as to the privilege of the people in this respect. Those who composed that convention were (as the sacred historian informs us) the apostles, elders, and brethren; first the apostles, the extraordinary ministers of Jesus, who were destined to be the founders of his church, and whose office, like the title that expressed it, was temporary, and expired with them; secondly, the elders, *πρεσβυτεροι*, the stated and ordinary pastors, whose office was successive and perpetual; thirdly, the brethren, that is, as the term in the New Testament is known to denote, private christians, who possessed no particular charge or office in the church. And to cut off all pretext, that these last were present only as witnesses or bystanders, the decree runs as much in their name as in the name of the apostles and presbyters, being given expressly and authoritatively as the joint command of all the three classes mentioned. Thus v. 23, &c. “The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting to the brethren which are of the

“ Gentiles. Forasmuch as we have heard, it  
“ seemed good unto us, being assembled with  
“ one accord, to lay upon you no greater burden  
“ than these necessary things.”

I do not say that that meeting could be denominated either a provincial or a diocesan synod, and far less a general council. This model of management, in regard to ecclesiastic matters, was not then devised. But that the apostles themselves, notwithstanding their supernatural gifts, called the private disciples to assist in the determination of matters of public concernment, may serve as demonstration to us of the natural title that such have (whatever be the model) to participate in those councils whereby the christian community are to be concluded. And that private christians continued, in the first ages, to share in the deliberations of their synods, we have sufficient evidence, as was signified already, from the ancient ecclesiastical writings still extant.

However, as in the space of a few centuries matters were, in this respect, greatly altered, and the church wore a new face, and as these came at last to be totally excluded, it began of course to be maintained as a doctrine, that those persons, who did not belong to any of the sacred orders, were absolutely unfit for being received into their councils, to deliberate and judge in spiritual and holy things; that for the pastors to  
admit

admit them, would be to betray their trust, and profane their office ; and for such unhallowed men to arrogate any power in these matters, would be no better than a sacrilegious usurpation.

But before such tenets as these, which savour so much of the political views of an aspiring faction, and so little of the liberal spirit of the gospel, could generally obtain, several causes had contributed in preparing the minds of the people. On every occurrence the pastors had taken care to improve the respect of the lower ranks, by widening the distance between their own order, and the condition of their christian brethren ; and for this purpose had early broached a distinction, which, in process of time, universally prevailed, of the whole christian commonwealth into clergy and laity. The terms are derived from two Greek words, κληρος, lot or inheritance, and λαος, people. The plain intention was to suggest, that the former, the pastors or clergy, for they appropriated the term κληρος to themselves, were selected and contradistinguished from the multitude, as being, in the present world, by way of eminence, God's *peculium*, or special inheritance.

It is impossible to conceive a claim in appearance more arrogant, or in reality worse founded. God is indeed in the Old Testament said to be  
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the inheritance of the Levites, because a determined share of the sacrifices and offerings made to God was in part to serve them instead of an estate in land, such as was given to each of the other tribes. But I pray you mark the difference; no where is the tribe of Levi called God's inheritance, though that expression is repeatedly used of the whole nation. Concerning the whole Israelitish nation, Moses, who was himself a Levite, says in an address to God, Deut. ix, 29,—  
 “ They are thy people, and thine inheritance,  
 “ which thou broughtest out by thy mighty  
 “ power.” The words in the septuagint translation deserve our particular attention. *Ουτοι λαος  
 εσ κ' κληρος εσ ες εξαγαγες εκ γης Αιγυπτου εν τη ισχυι  
 εσ τη με γαλη.* The same persons are in the same sentence declared to be both the *λαος* and the *κληρος*. What, says the canonist, at once laymen and clergy? That is certainly absurd; the characters are incompatible: yet it did not then appear so to Moses. Now would it be thought reasonable or just, that what was allowed to be the privilege and the glory of every Israelite, under the more servile establishment of Moses, should, under the more liberal dispensation of the gospel, be disclaimed by all those disciples of Jesus, who have not been admitted into the sacred order, which they, for this reason, have called clerical.

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When we recur to the use of the term in the New Testament, we find one passage, and but one, wherein it is applied to persons. The passage is in the first epistle of Peter, the fifth chapter, and third verse, which is thus rendered in our version, “Neither as being Lords over  
 “God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the  
 “flock.” The words in the original are, *μηδ’  
 ὡς κυριευούτες τῶν κληρῶν, ἀλλὰ τυποὶ γινόμενοι τῇ ποιμνίᾳ*. They are part of a charge given to the presbyters, or pastors, relating to their care of the people committed to them, who are called God’s flock, which they are commanded to feed, of which they are to take the oversight, not the mastery, and to which they are to serve as patterns. The same persons, therefore, who both in this, and in the preceding verse, are styled *ποιμνιον*, the flock, under the direction of God’s ministers, the shepherds, are also called *κληροὶ*, his inheritance, over whom their pastors are commanded not to domineer. It is somewhat extraordinary, that in the choice of distinctions, which the church-rulers so soon showed a disposition to affect, they should have paid almost as little attention to the style, as they did to the spirit and meaning of the sacred books. Let it be observed then, in the first place, that this distinction, so far from having a foundation in Scripture, stands in direct contradiction both to the letter, and to  
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the sense of that unerring standard. I am not ignorant that some expositors, jealous for the priesthood, render the term κληροι here, the church's possessions. Not to mention that this explication but ill suits the context, and annihilates the contrast between an imperious master and an engaging pattern, and supposeth an awkward ellipsis in the words, allow me to ask, What were the church's possessions in those days? Was she so early vested with lands and hereditaments, for it is to such only that the term κληροι, when denoting property or possession, is applied? Or have those interpreters been dreaming of the truly golden age of pope Gregory the seventh, when the patrimonies of some metropolitical and patriarchal sees were indeed like dukedoms and principalities, and the grand hierarch himself could dispose of kingdoms and empires? In the apostolic times, on the contrary, the church's patrimony consisted mostly, I may say, in persecution and calumny, hatred and derision, agreeably to the prediction of her Lord.

Some have ascribed, but very unjustly, the origin of the distinction we have been considering, to Clemens Romanus, who, in his epistle to the Corinthians, which I had formerly an occasion of quoting, contradistinguishes λαϊκοι (the laics, as we should be apt to render it) among the Jews, from the high-priest, the priests, and the Levites,

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It ought to be observed, that it is introduced by him when speaking of the Jewish priesthood, and not of the christian ministry; neither does it stand in opposition to any one general term, such as κληρος, or κληρικοι; but after mentioning three different orders, he uses the term λαϊκοι, to include, under one comprehensive name, all that were not specially comprized under any of the former; and in this respect it exactly corresponds to the application sometimes made of the Latin word *popularis*. In this view it may with equal propriety be contrasted with men in office of any kind whatever. Thus in speaking of civil government, it may be opposed to ἀρχόντες, to denote the people as distinguished from the magistrates; or, in speaking of any army, to στρατηγοι, to denote the soldiers as distinguished from the commanders or officers.

I maintain further, that in the way the term is employed by Clement, it does not imply that he considered it as in itself exclusive of the priesthood and Levitical tribe, to which the term λαϊκοι is opposed in that passage. They are here indeed excluded, because separately named, but not from the import of the word. But as this criticism may, to a superficial hearer, appear a mere subtlety or refinement, I shall illustrate it from some similar examples, which I hope will be thought decisive. Acts xv, 22. “Then pleased

“pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church.” Here are three orders plainly mentioned and distinguished, the apostles or extraordinary ministers, the elders or fixed pastors, and the church or christian people. But does this imply that the name church does not properly comprehend the pastors as well as the people? By no means. They are not indeed, in this passage, comprised under the term, not because it does not properly extend so far, (which is not fact) but because they are separately named. The import of the expression is, therefore, no more than this, “The apostles and elders, with all the christian brethren, who come not under either of these denominations.” Of the same kind exactly is the passage lately quoted from Peter, where the *πρεσβυτεροι* are opposed to the *κληροι*, not as though the former constituted no part of God’s heritage, or, to adopt the modern style, *clergy*; they only do not constitute that part, of which they are here commanded to take the charge. In like manner Clement’s mention of *λαικοι*, after speaking of the several orders of the Jewish priesthood, imports neither more nor less than if he had said, “And all the jewish people.” So that his manner of using this term affords no foundation for the distinction that was long after his time introduced; no more than the general argument against the encroach-



encroachment of the people, or of the pastors, on each other, taken from the rigid observance which the different classes, under the Mosaic economy, had of their respective functions, affords a foundation (as some have ridiculously urged) for concluding that the orders, in the christian ministry, were the same in number with the Jewish. So far indeed is Clement from giving any insinuation of this kind, that, in a passage formerly quoted, he expressly mentions the christian orders as being two, and as having been clearly and by name predicted in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament.

But to return to the distinction of the whole church into clergy and laity: in after ages they even improved upon their predecessors. The schoolmen (a modest race, all clergymen) thought it was doing the laymen too much honour to derive the name from λαος, populus. It suited their notions better to deduce it from λαας, lapis, a stone. Take for a specimen a few things advanced on this subject by some celebrated doctors, as quoted by Altensfaig in his *Lexicon Theologicum*. “Capitur clericus pro viro docto, “scientifico, perito, scientia pleno, repleto et “experto. E contra laicus capitur pro viro “indocto, imperito, insipiente et lapideo. Unde “laicus dicetur a λαας Græce, quod est lapis “Latine. Et sic omnis clericus, in quantum “clericus,

“ clericus, est laudabilis; laicus vero, in quantum  
“ laicus, est vituperandus. Clerici quoque &  
“ toto genere de jure præponuntur, et debent  
“ præponi laicis.” To these I shall add the  
sentiments of cardinal Bona, in relation to the  
care that ought to be taken by the clergy, that  
laymen may not be allowed to do themselves  
harm by studying the profounder parts of scrip-  
ture, which their stupidity is utterly incapable of  
comprehending. He kindly mentions, at the  
same time, the books which he thinks they will  
not be the worse for, and which, therefore, they  
may be permitted to peruse. “ De laicis in  
“ quibus mater cæcitatæ superbia regnat, qua-  
“ tenus ad ea quæ sunt fidei et morum. Cum  
“ enim sicut idiotæ presumunt sacram scriptu-  
“ ram exponere, quæ est profundissima omnium  
“ scripturarum. Cum iterum habeant quandam  
“ honestatem exteriorem, contemnunt vitam  
“ omnium aliorum, et merito hujus duplicis su-  
“ perbiæ excæcantur, ut incidant in errorem  
“ istum pessimum, per quem excæcantur a Deo,  
“ ut nesciant discernere quid bonum est et quid  
“ malum. Quare non omnes scripturæ libros  
“ legant laici. Quoniam nihil est tam sanctum  
“ et salubre et pium quo non contingat abuti,  
“ sic de libris evenit, quorum non est culpa,  
“ neque scribentium, sed scœlus est in abusu :  
“ non tamen arcendi videntur ab opusculis mo-  
ralibus

“ralibus et devotis, nullam in se difficultatem;  
“nec ambiguitatem, nec absurditatem in tran-  
“slatione gerentibus, cujusmodi sunt historiæ,  
“vel vitæ, vel legendæ sanctorum, nec non me-  
“ditationes sanctæ.” How condescending is  
the good doctor! He does not absolutely pro-  
hibit the stupid and conceited generation of lay-  
men from reading some of the plainer books of  
Scripture, and indulges them freely in what is  
better for them, story-books and godly medita-  
tions, and the legends of the saints.

I shall have occasion afterwards to trace a little  
further the most material changes, to which those  
above-mentioned, as well as other novel names  
and distinctions, were rendered subservient.

## LECTURE X.

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I HAVE met with the observation, though I do not at present recollect where, that the world is ruled by names. It matters not who said so : but experience shows us, that there is more truth in the remark than any one, at first hearing, would be apt to imagine. When names are first assigned to offices, or even to orders of men, there is commonly an association of ideas favourable or unfavourable in some respect or other, which is derived from the more ancient to the more recent application of the term. And even if the term should be coined for the occasion, the materials whence it is taken, that is, the known etymology, produces the same effect. It invariably gives rise to certain associations ; these influence opinion, and opinion governs practice. We have seen the tendency, which the distinction of mankind into clergy and laity had to heighten, in the minds of the populace, that is, more than nine-tenths of the people, the reverence for the sacred order. The effect thus actually produced,

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in ignorant ages, through the arrogance of the one side, and the superstition of the other, is sufficiently manifest, and perfectly astonishing. I shall proceed to take notice of the consequences of some other innovations in the style adopted on these subjects.

A close resemblance, both in titles and functions, to the Jewish priesthood, came soon to be very much affected by the pastors of the church. The very names of high-priest, priest, and Levite, which the inspired writers had never once applied to any class of ministers, ordinary or extraordinary, in the christian commonwealth, appeared to have a wonderful fascination in them, that rendered them incomparably superiour to any appellations which Jesus Christ, or his apostles, had thought fit to bestow. Beside the fancied dignity, the sacerdotal titles had been always understood to convey the notion of certain rights, which conduced both to the honour, and to the emolument, of those to whom these titles belonged. Now having availed themselves of the supposed analogy, they thought they had the best right in the world to extend their claims much further; arguing, that because the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, were the high-priests, priests, and Levites, of a superiour, a more heavenly and spiritual dispensation, they ought to possess more of the unrighteous mammon, that

is, more earthly treasure, and greater temporal power. And, what is still more extraordinary, by such wretched reasoning the bulk of mankind were convinced.

It is worth while to remark the great difference between the style adopted by the apostles, in relation to all sacred matters, and that which, in the course of a few ages, crept into the church, and even became universal in it. Under the Mosaic economy, which exacted the rigid observance of a burdensome ritual, the only place devoted to the ceremonial and temporary service, consisting in sacrifices and oblations, ablutions, aspersions, and perfumes, was the temple of Jerusalem, for no where else could the public ceremonies be lawfully performed. The places that were dedicated to what may be called comparatively the moral and unchangeable part of the service, consisting in prayers and thanksgivings, and instructive lessons from the law and the prophets, were the synagogues, which, as they were under no limitation, in point of number, time, or place, might be built in any city, or village, where a suitable congregation of worshippers could be found ; not only in Judea, but wherever the Jewish nation was dispersed, and that even though their temple and their polity should subsist no longer. The ceremonies of the law being represented in the gospel as but the shadows.

shadows of the spiritual good things disclosed by the latter, and its corporal purifications, and other rites, as the weak and beggarly elements, intended to serve but for a time, and to be instrumental in ushering a more divine and rational dispensation, it was no wonder that they borrowed no names from the priesthood, to denote the christian ministry, or from the parade of the temple-service much calculated to dazzle the senses, to express the simple but spiritual devotions and moral instructions, for which the disciples of Jesus assembled under the humble roof of one of their brethren. On the contrary, in the name they gave to the sacred offices, as well as to other things, regarding their religious observances, they showed more attention to the service of the synagogue, as in every respect more analogous to the reasonable service required by the gospel. The place where they met is once, James ii, 2, called a synagogue, but never a temple. “If there come into your assembly,” *εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν ὑμῶν*. And it is well known, that the names teacher, elder, overseer, attendant, or minister, and even angel, or messenger, of the congregation, were, in relation to the ministry of the Jewish synagogue, in current use.

When we consider this frequent recourse to terms of the one kind, and this uniform avoidance of those of the other; and when at the same

time we consider how much the sacred writers were inured to all the names relating to the sacerdotal functions; and how obvious the application must have been, if it had been proper; it is impossible to conceive this conduct as arising from any accidental circumstance. We are compelled to say with Grotius, (*De imperio sum. Pötest. cap. ii, 5,*) “Non de nihilo est; quod ab  
 “eo loquendi genere, et Christus ipse, et apos-  
 “toli semper abstinerunt.” It is indeed most natural to conclude, that it must have sprung from a sense of the unsuitableness of such an use to this divine economy, which, like its author,  
 “is made not after the law of a carnal command-  
 “ment, but after the power of an endless life.” I may add, it must have sprung from a conviction, that such an application might mislead the unwary into misapprehensions of the nature of the evangelical law.

In it Jesus Christ is represented as our only priest; and as he ever liveth to make intercession for us, his priesthood is unchangeable, untransmissible, and eternal. A priest is a mediator between God and man. Now we are taught, in this divine economy, that as there is one God, there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. The unity of the mediatorship, and consequently of the priesthood, in the strictest sense of the word, is as really an article  
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of our religion as the unity of the Godhead. I do not deny, that in a looser sense every minister of religion may be called a mediator, or, if ye please, a priest; inasmuch as he is the mouth of the congregation, in presenting their prayers to God, and is, as it were, also the mouth of God, on whose part he admonishes the people. The great reason against innovating by the introduction of these names is, not because the names are in no sense applicable, (that is not pretended) but because first, they are unnecessary; secondly, their former application must unavoidably create misapprehensions concerning the nature of the evangelical ministry; and thirdly, because the inspired penmen of the New Testament, who best understood the nature of that ministry, never did apply to it those names. But to return, the only proper sacrifice, under the new covenant, to which all the sacrifices of the old pointed, and in which they were consummated, is the death of Christ. This, as it cannot, like the legal sacrifices, be repeated, neither requires nor admits any supplement. “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Sometimes, indeed, in regard to the Mosaic institution, an allegorical style is adopted, wherein all christians are represented as priests, being, as it were, in baptism, consecrated to the service of God, the whole community as a

holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to him, the bodies of christians as temples destined for the inhabitation of God through the spirit. The oblations are thanksgivings, prayer, and praise. The same name is also given to acts of beneficence and mercy. "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." This is also the manner of the earliest fathers. Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, after mentioning Christ as our all-sufficient high-priest, insists, that in consequence of our christian vocation, we, his disciples, not the pastors exclusively, are God's true sacerdotal family. *Ἡμεῖς ἀρχιερατικόν, τὸ ἀληθινὸν γένος ἐσμεν* 73 θε2. In this allusive way, also, the terms circumcision, passover, unleavened bread, altar, sabbath, and the like, are sometimes allegorically applied by the sacred penmen. But no where are the terms high-priest, priest, or Levite, applied peculiarly to the ministers of Christ.

Doctor Hickes, a zealous assertor of what he calls the christian priesthood, has a wonderful method of solving this difficulty. He supposes, that Christ and his apostles acted the politicians in this particular. According to him they were afraid, that with all the miracles and supernatural gifts they could boast, it was an undertaking too bold to be hazarded, to appear as rivals to the Jewish

Jewish priests. Here he inadvertently ascribes a conduct to Jesus Christ, which, in my apprehension, reflects not a little on the sincerity of that spotless character. “As a Jew,” says he, (Let. I, chap. iii, § 1,) “he was to observe the law and the temple worship, and live in communion with the Jews; which, though he could do as a king and a prophet, yet he could not do it with congruity, had he declared himself to be their sovereign pontif, that very high-priest, of which Aaron himself was but a type and shadow.” But allow me to ask, Why could he not? Was it because there was a real incongruity betwixt his conforming to the Jewish worship, and his character of high-priest? If there was, he acted incongruously, for he did conform; and all he attained by not declaring himself a priest, was not to avoid, but to dissemble, this incongruity. And if there was none in conforming, where was the incongruity in avowing a conduct which was in itself congruous and defensible? We are therefore forced to conclude, from this passage, either that our Lord acted incongruously, and was forced to recur to dissimulation to conceal it, or that Doctor Hickes argues very inconsequentially. The true christian can be at no loss to determine which side of the alternative he ought to adopt.

But

But to consider a little the hypothesis itself, the apostles might boldly, it seems, and without such offence as could endanger the cause, call their master the Messiah, the king, (a name with the Jews above every other human title.) They might, in this respect, say safely, that though their chief priests and rulers had killed the Lord of life; God had raised him from the dead, nay, had done more, had exalted him to his own right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to the people, and the remission of sins. They might thus openly, if not put him in the place of the priest, put him in the place of the Almighty, to whom the priests are bound to minister, and from whom ultimately all the blessings must be obtained; nay, and represent his power as more extensive in procuring divine forgiveness and favour, (the great object of all their sacrifices) than any that had ever been experienced through the observance of the Mosaic rites; inasmuch as “by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Yet, says the doctor, they durst not call him priest. Now we know that the usurping of this title was not, by the Jewish institute, either treason or blasphemy; whereas, the titles and attributes, which the apostles gave their master, were accounted both treasonable and blasphemous  
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by the unbelieving Jews, and with too much appearance of truth, if Jesus had been the impostor they imagined him; for the disciples set him in their representations above every thing that is named, either in the heaven, or upon the earth. I might say further, Did the first preachers hesitate to maintain the cause of their master, notwithstanding that by implication it charged the guilt of his blood on the chief priests and rulers, as those rulers themselves but too plainly perceived? But why do I say by implication? They often most explicitly charged them with this atrocious guilt. It was in the midst of the sanhedrim that Stephen boldly said, *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them who shewed before of the coming of the just one, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:* Might they thus with safety to the cause, at least, though not with impunity to their persons, exhibit those priests as homicides, parricides, regicides, and, if I may be allowed a bold expression, even deicides; and yet durst not, without involving the whole in one general ruin, so much as insinuate that they also had their priests? *Credat Judæus Apella.*

In short, the whole pretext of this learned doctor is precisely as if one should say, that if in a country like this, for instance, one were to

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raise a rebellion in favour of a pretender to the crown, the partisans might, with comparatively little danger or offence, style the sovereign in possession a tyrant and usurper, and proclaim the man they would set up, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, and even add, Defender of the Faith. But it would be imminently hazardous, and would probably ruin the cause, to insinuate that he had the patronage of any ecclesiastic benefices. They may with safety denominate him the head of the church, and of the law, the source of all honours and authority in the state, and even give him higher titles than ever monarch had enjoyed before: they may assume to themselves the names of all sorts of offices, civil or military, under him; but if they would avoid inevitable perdition, let them not style any of themselves his chaplains. In fact, the absurdity here is not equal to the former.

Let it not be imagined, Gentlemen, from what has been advanced above, that I mean to contend with any man about words and names. I know they are in themselves but mere sounds; and things indifferent. And, doubtless, any one sound is naturally as fit to serve as the sign of any idea as another. It is a matter of no moment to us, at present, whether we call a minister of religion, bishop, prelate, presbyter, priest, or clergyman. And pertinaciously to refuse the  
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use of the names which custom, the arbiter of language, has authorized, might be thought to savour of puritanical fanaticism. The allusion they plainly bore at first is now scarcely minded, and their etymology is, in regard to most people, either unknown or forgotten. But in deducing the train of changes which, in process of time, was effected both in things and in opinions, it is pertinent to take notice of the purpose originally served by the introduction of such novel names and phrases, as those on which we have been remarking once were, as well as of the meanings originally conveyed by them. To causes in appearance the most trivial often effects the most important are to be ascribed.

I might add to the above observations, that some carried this species of innovation so far as even, one would think, to envy the pagans the appellations they bestowed on the ministers of an idolatrous worship, and on those who presided in their secret and abominable rites. The learned doctor lately quoted, though a sincere christian in his way, possessed much of that spirit, and seems to regret exceedingly that we have no such fine words and high-sounding titles as hierophant, hieromyst, and mystagogue. It was the same spirit that prompted, in the pastors, the affectation of epithets, added to their names, expressive of their virtues, and of  
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the esteem and veneration of those that approached them, such as most holy, most blessed, most religious, most worthy of God, beloved of God, reverend, venerable, and many others, which it were tedious to enumerate, together with certain ceremonies, such as bowing the head, kissing the hands, and the like. Of these I shall only say, that though some of them became afterwards, as words of course, mere marks of civil respect for the office, they were, in their application at first, intirely personal. If we were to settle a sort of spiritual barometer for determining the precise quantity at which piety and virtue, at any given time, arrived in the church, I could not assign a better than the use of these epithets and ceremonies, holding it as an invariable canon, that in proportion as the external signs multiplied, the substance of internal religion decreased. At no time could the pharisaical scribes be accused of greater ostentation, or more desire of greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi, than were, a few ages afterwards, the ministers of the humble Jesus, who had so expressly warned his followers against the imitation of their vain-glorious manners. Yet such are the manners which even, in these more enlightened times, the priestly pride of some prelatical preachers has



has instigated them to write whole volumes to revive.

One of the natural consequences of all those great distinctions of the sacred order was, that they made way for another, by which the ministers of religion, in a manner, appropriated the term church to themselves. I have had occasion, in these lectures, to lay before you the only undoubted acceptations, wherein I find the word *ἐκκλησία* employed in the New Testament, and have observed, that when applied to the disciples of Christ, it always denotes either the whole christian community, or all those of a particular congregation, under the guidance of their own pastors. I have also pointed out one deviation from the latter of these original meanings naturally consequent on the change that in a few centuries ensued, when the bishop, instead of the oversight of one congregation, had the superintendancy of many congregations, that is, when his one congregation, on account of the increase of proselytes, was split into several, and when the habit of applying the word in the singular number to the whole of a bishop's charge prevailed over strict propriety, and the primitive use of the term. This prepared men for a still farther extension of the name to all the congregations of a province under the same

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metropolitan, and afterwards to all those of a civil diocese under the same patriarch or exarch.

I now intend to point out another still more remarkable deviation, a deviation not from the latter, as those now mentioned were, but from the former of the two primitive senses, whereby the word is applied to the christian commonwealth. Then it means, as is pretended, either the church collective, that is, the whole community of christians, or the church representative; that is, say some, the whole clerical orders, say others, the church judicatories, especially the supreme. And this, I acknowledge, is a distinction that is favoured not only by those of the romish communion, but by most sects of protestants also. To many, however, and I acknowledge myself one of the number, it is manifest, that it is no less a novelty than the former, having no foundation in the scriptural usage.

The Hebrew word *קהל* exactly corresponds to the Greek *ἐκκλησία*, and is commonly rendered by it in the septuagint, the only Greek translation of the Old Testament in use in the days of our Saviour. Its idiom and phraseology was consequently become the standard, in all matters that concerned religion, to all the Jewish writers who used the Greek language, and were commonly

monly distinguished by the name of Hellenists. From them the term was originally borrowed by the penmen of the New Testament. From their manner of using it, therefore, the general meanings of the word are to be sought. But though the phrases **כָּהֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל** in Hebrew, and **πασα ἡ ἐκκλησια Ισραηλ** in Greek, the whole church of Israel, do frequently occur in the Old Testament, there is not a single passage in which they are not confessedly equivalent to the phrases **כָּל גּוֹי יִשְׂרָאֵל** and **πάν το ἐθνος Ισραηλ**, all the nation of Israel. The same may be said of the phrases **לֵהל אֱלֹהִים** and **עַם אֱלֹהִים**, **ἡ ἐκκλησια Θεου** and **ὁ λαος Θεου**, the church of God and the people of God. A distinction between these would have been pronounced by them inconceivable, as being a distinction between the church and its constituent members. In the Latin translation, called the Vulgate, the date of which, or a great part of which, if I mistake not, is about the beginning of the fifth century, the Greek word is commonly retained, having been long before naturalized among christians. Accordingly they rendered those phrases in the Old Testament *omnis ecclesia Israel* and *ecclesia Dei*.

I know not for what reason our English translators have never admitted the word *church* into their version of the Old Testament, notwithstanding the frequent use they have made of it

in their translation of the New. They have always rendered the Hebrew word abovementioned by the English words congregation, assembly, or some synonymous term. I do not mean to say, that in so doing, they have mistranslated the word. Either of these English names is, perhaps, as well adapted to express the sense of the Hebrew, as the appellatives of one language commonly are to convey the ideas suggested by those of another. But these English words were altogether as fit for expressing the sense of the word *ἐκκλησία* in the New Testament as of the word *קהל* in the Old, the former being the term by which the latter had been rendered almost uniformly in the septuagint, and which had been employed as equivalent by all the Hellenist Jews. What I blame, therefore, in our translators, is the want of uniformity. They ought constantly to have rendered the original expression either *church* in the Old Testament, or *congregation* in the New. Terms so perfectly coincident in signification, as those Hebrew and Greek names are, ought to have been translated by the same English word. There is one advantage at least resulting from such an attention to uniformity, which is this, that if the application of the word should, in a few passages, be dubious, a comparison with the other passages wherein it occurs, often serves intirely to remove the doubt.

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They are the more inexcusable, in regard to the present instance, that they do not refuse the title of church to the Israelitish commonwealth, when an occasion of giving it occurs in the New Testament, though they would take no occasion in the Old. Thus they have rendered the words of Stephen, who says, speaking of Moses, Acts vii, 38, “ This is he that was in the church in “ the wilderness.” Οὐδε εἰν ὁ γενομενος εν τῃ ἐκκλησιᾷ εν τῇ ἐρημῳ.

But in the use neither of the Greek word in the New Testament, nor of the correspondent Hebrew word in the old, do we find a vestige of an application of the term to a smaller part of the community, their governours, pastors, or priests, for instance, as representing the whole. The only passage, as far as I can learn, that has been, with any appearance of plausibility, alleged for this purpose, is Matt. xviii, 17, where our Lord, in the directions he gives for removing offences between brethren, enjoins the party offended, after repeated admonitions in a more private manner have proved ineffectual, to relate the whole to the church, εἰπε τη ἐκκλησιᾷ; and it is added, “ If he neglect to hear the church, “ let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican.” Now I ask by what rule of sound criticism can we arbitrarily impose here on the word *church*, the signification of church representative,

sentative, a signification which we do not find it bears in one other passage of scripture? To affirm, without proof, that this is the sense of it here, is taking for granted the very point in question.

But we have more than merely negative evidence that the meaning of the word is here, as in other places, no more than congregation, and that the term ought to have been rendered so. Let it be observed, that our Lord gave these directions during the subsistence of the Mosaic establishment; and if we believe that he spoke intelligibly, or with a view to be understood, we must believe also, that he used the word in an acceptation with which the hearers were acquainted. Dodwell himself saw the propriety of this rule of interpreting, when he said, \* “ It  
 “ very much confirms me in my reasonings,  
 “ when I find an interpretation of the scriptures  
 “ not only agreeable to the words of the scrip-  
 “ tures, but agreeable also to the notions and  
 “ significations of words then received. For  
 “ that sense which was most likely to be then  
 “ understood was, in all likelihood, the true  
 “ sense intended by the Holy Ghost himself.  
 “ Otherwise there could be no security that his  
 “ true sense could be conveyed to future ages,

\* Distinction between soul and spirit, &c., § 7.

“ if they had been themselves mistaken in it,  
 “ to whose understanding the Holy Ghost was  
 “ then particularly concerned to accommodate  
 “ himself.” Now all the then known acceptations, as I showed before, of the name *ἐκκλησία*, were these two, the whole Jewish people, and a particular congregation. The scope of the place sufficiently shows it could not be the former of these senses, it must therefore be the latter. What further confirms this interpretation is, that the Jews were accustomed to call those assemblies, which met together for worship in the same synagogue, by this appellation; and had, if we may believe some learned men conversant in Jewish antiquities, a rule of procedure similar to that here recommended, which our Lord adopted from the synagogue, and transplanted into his church.

Another collateral and corroborative evidence, that by *ἐκκλησία* is here meant not a representative body, but the whole of a particular congregation, is the actual usage of the church for the first three hundred years. I had occasion formerly to remark, that as far down as Cyprian's time, which was the middle of the third century, when the power of the people was in the decline, it continued to be the practice, that nothing in matters of scandal and censure could be concluded without the consent and approval of the

congregation. And this, as it appears to have been pretty uniform, and to have subsisted from the beginning, is, in my opinion, the best commentary which we, at this distance, can obtain on the passage.

If any impartial hearer is not satisfied on this point, I would recommend it to him, without the aid of any commentator on either side of the question, but with the help of proper concordances, attentively to search the scriptures. Let him examine every passage in the New Testament wherein the word we render church is to be found, let him canvas in the writings of the Old Testament every sentence wherein the correspondent word occurs, let him add to these the apocryphal books received by the romanists, which, as they were either originally written, or translated by Hellenists, amongst whom the term *ἐκκλησία* was in frequent use, must be of some authority in ascertaining the Jewish acceptation of the word; and if he find a single passage, wherein it clearly means either the priesthood, or the rulers of the nation, or any thing that can be called a church representative, let him fairly admit the distinction as scriptural and proper. Otherwise he cannot admit it, in a consistency with any just rule of interpretation.

I observed, in a preceding lecture, that the term *ἐκκλησία* is, in some passages, applied to the people,



people, exclusively of the pastors. The same was remarked of the word *κληροι*, (not as though these terms did not properly comprehend both, but because, in collectives, the name of a whole is often given to a great majority) but I have not discovered one passage wherein either *εκκλησια*, or *κληρος*, is applied to the pastors, exclusively of the people. The notion, therefore, of a church representative, how commonly soever it has been received, is a mere usurper of later date. And it has fared here as it sometimes does in cases of usurpation, the original proprietor comes, though gradually, to be at length totally dispossessed. Should any man now talk of the powers of the church, and of the rights of churchmen, would the hearers apprehend, that he meant the powers of a christian congregation, or the rights of all who are members of the christian community? And if they should come to learn that this is his meaning, would they not be apt to say, ‘ It is pity that this man, before he attempt to speak on these subjects, does not learn to speak intelligibly, by conforming to the current use of the language?’ It is therefore not without reason that I affirm, that the more modern acceptation, though an intruder, has jostled out the rightful and primitive one almost intirely. But as every man, who would be understood, is under a necessity of

employing words according to the general use of the time present,

*Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi;*

when I employ, for the future, any of the words affected by this remark, I am always, unless where the connection indicates the contrary, to be understood as using them in the sense in which they are now commonly received. Only by the deduction that has been given of the origin of this change, we may perceive, that from what is said in relation to the church in scripture, nothing can justly be concluded in support of church-authority, or the privileges of churchmen, in the sense which these terms generally have at present.

The distinction just now taken notice of, in concurrence with the interferences between the civil magistrate and the minister of religion, or between the spiritual tribunals (as they were called) and the secular, gave rise to another distinction in the christian community between church and state. When the gospel was first published by the apostles, and the apostolic men that came after them, it was natural and necessary to distinguish believers from infidels, living in the same country, and under the same civil governours. The distinction between a christian church or society, and a Jewish or an idolatrous state,

state, was perfectly intelligible. But to distinguish the church from its own members, those duly received into it by baptism, and continuing in the profession of the faith, we may venture to affirm, would have been considered then as a mere refinement, a sort of metaphysical abstraction. For where can the difference lie, when every member of the state is a member of the church, and conversely, every member of the church is a member of the state? Accordingly, no such distinction ever obtained among the Jews, nor was there any thing similar to it in any nation before the establishment of the christian religion under Constantine.

But what hath since given real significance to the distinction is, in the first place, the limitation of the term *church* to the clergy and the ecclesiastical judicatories, and, in the second place, the claims of independency advanced by these, as well as certain claims of power and jurisdiction, in some things differing, and in some things interfering with the claims of the magistrate. For however much connected the civil powers and church-governours are in christian states, still they are distinct bodies of men, and, in some respects, independent. Their very connection will conduce to render them rival powers, and if so, confederate against each other. When this came actually to be the case, considering  
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the character and circumstances of the times, it will not be matter of great astonishment, that every thing contributed to give success to the encroachments of the latter upon the former.

Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, once wrote to the empress Matilda, mother of Henry II, king of England, in these words: "*God has drawn his bow, and will speedily shoot from thence the arrows of death, if princes do not permit his spouse, the church, for the love of whom he had deigned to die, to remain free, and to be honoured with the possession of those privileges and dignities, which he had purchased for her with his blood on the cross.*" "Whoever has read the gospel," says the noble historian \*, "must be astonished to hear, that an exemption for clergymen from all civil justice was one of the privileges purchased by the blood of Christ for his church." He might have said further, must be astonished to hear, as the words manifestly imply, that the church, the spouse of Jesus Christ, for the love of whom he died, is no other than the clergy, and that the heavenly blessings, (for that his kingdom was not of this world he himself plainly declared) which were the price of his blood, were, secular dominion, earthly treasure, and an unlimited licence in the

\* Lord Littleton.



commission of crimes with impunity. It is not easy to conceive a grosser perversion of the nature, design, and spirit of the gospel. Yet by means of the artful appropriation of some names, the word *church* in particular, and misapplication of others, such absurdities were propagated by one side, and believed by the other. Nay, the frequency of the abuse is acknowledged, even by such roman catholic authors as can make any pretension to discernment and candour. Fleury, the ecclesiastical historian, has pointed out the perversion of the term *church* in more places than one. “ Peter de Blois,” he tells us, “ warmly recommended to the bishop of Orleans, “ to remonstrate with his cousin king Philip, “ and warn him against laying any subsidies “ whatever upon the clergy, in support of the “ war, even though a holy war, for extending “ the dominions of the church ; as nothing, he “ affirms, should be exacted from the clergy but “ prayers, of which the laity stand greatly in “ need.” Further, he acquaints us, that this zealous man wrote also to John of Coutances, whom he exhorted to employ his credit with the king of England, to maintain the dignity of the church. “ She is free,” says he, “ by the “ liberty which Jesus Christ has procured us, “ but to load her with exactions, is to bring her “ into

“ into bondage like Hagar. If your princes,  
 “ under pretence of this new pilgrimage, will  
 “ render the church tributary, every son of the  
 “ church ought to resist, and die, rather than  
 “ submit to servitude.” The historian pertinently subjoins \*, “ We see here the equivocal  
 “ use made in those days of the words *church*  
 “ and *liberty*; as if the *church* delivered by Jesus  
 “ Christ were only the clergy, or as if our deliverance were from aught but sin and the legal  
 “ ceremonies.” Again, from the same hand, we are informed, that, in reply to a letter from pope Boniface VIII, wherein, by the same perversion of words, the pontiff had appropriated the title church to ecclesiastics, king Philip of France, amongst other things, wrote to him,  
 “ The church, the spouse of Jesus Christ, does  
 “ not consist of clergy only, but of laymen  
 “ also. He has delivered it from the slavery of  
 “ sin, and the yoke of the old law, and has  
 “ willed, that all who compose it, both clerks  
 “ and laics, enjoy this freedom. It was not for  
 “ ecclesiastics only that he died, nor to them

\* On voit ici les equivoques ordinaires en ce tems là sur les mots d'Eglise et de Liberté; comme si l'Eglise delivrée par Jesus Christ n'étoit que le clergé, où qu'il nous eut delivrez d'autre chose que du peché et des ceremonies legales. L. lxxiv, ch. xv. L. lxxxix, ch. cxliv.

“ alone

“ alone that he promised grace in this life, and  
 “ glory in the next. It is but by an abuse of  
 “ language that the clergy arrogate peculiarly  
 “ to themselves the liberty, which Jesus Christ  
 “ has purchased for us.” Which of the two,  
 the king or the priest, was the greater statesman,  
 I know not, but it does not require a moment’s  
 hesitation to pronounce, which was the better  
 divine. The inferiority of his holiness here,  
 even in his own profession, compared with his  
 majesty, in a profession not his own, is both  
 immense and manifest.

But amongst a rude and ignorant people, in  
 ages of barbarity and superstition, it was easy to  
 confound, in their minds, the cause of the priest  
 with the cause of God, in every quarrel which  
 the former happened to have with the magistrate.  
 I shall here remark in passing, and with it  
 conclude the present discourse, that it is doubt-  
 ful whether the word *ἐκκλησια* ever occurs in the  
 New Testament in a sense, wherein the word  
*church* is very common with us, as a name for  
 the place of worship. There are only two  
 passages, that I remember, which seem to convey  
 this sense. They are both in the eleventh chap-  
 ter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. The  
 first is, verse 18th, *When ye come together in  
 the church*, *συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*. Here,  
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however, the word is susceptible of another interpretation, as a name for the society. Thus we say, "The lords spiritual and temporal, and the commons, in parliament assembled," where parliament does not mean the house they meet in, but the assembly properly constituted. The other is verse 22d, *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the church of God?* της εκκλησιας τα θεα καλα φρονειτε: where, it is urged, the opposition of εκκλησια to οικια, the church to their houses, adds a probability to this interpretation. But this plea, though plausible, is not decisive. The sacred writers are not always studious of so much accuracy in their contrasts, nor is it here necessary to the sense. The apostle's argument on my hypothesis stands thus: What can be the reason of this abuse? Is it because ye have not houses of your own to eat and drink in? Or is it because ye despise the christian congregation to which ye belong? This, though it do not convey so exact a verbal antithesis, is, in my judgment, more in the spirit and style of the New Testament, than to speak of despising stone walls. But as to this I affirm nothing. To express the place of meeting, we find the word συναγωγη, as observed above, used by the apostle James. In ancient authors, the words first adopted were εκκλησιασηριον, εκκλησιας οικος, and



and κυριακον, whence the words *kirk* and *church*. At length the term εκκλησια, by a common metonymy, the thing contained for the thing containing, came to be universally employed in this acceptation.

## LECTURE XI.

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THE steps I have already mentioned and explained, advancing from presbytery to parochial episcopacy, thence to prelacy or diocesan episcopacy, from that to metropolitical primacy, and thence again to patriarchal superintendency, together with those methods I have pointed out to you, whereby the ministers of religion distinguished themselves from their christian brethren, insensibly prepared the minds of the people for the notion, that in ordination there was something exceedingly mysterious, and even inscrutable. It came at length not to be considered as a solemn manner of appointing a fit person to discharge the duties of the pastoral office amongst a particular flock or congregation, and of committing them to his care; but to be regarded more especially as the imprinting of a certain character, or unperceivable and incomprehensible signature on a person, a character which, though in consequence of human means employed by the proper minister it was

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conferred, could by no power less than omnipotence be removed. And though at first hearing, one would be apt to imagine, that by this tenet they derogated as much from the ecclesiastic power on one hand, as they enhanced it on the other, since they maintained, that the persons who gave this character, could not take it away, the effect on men's conceptions was very different. If a single ceremony, or form of words, could with as much facility withdraw as confer a gift in its nature invisible, nobody would be impressed with the conception, that any thing very wonderful had been either given or taken. The words or ceremony of ordaining would be considered as nothing more than the established mode of investing a man with the right of exercising canonically the sacred function; and the words or ceremony used in the deposition, as the mode of stripping him of that right, or privilege, so that he should no longer be entitled to exercise it. In this way he would be under the same canonical incapacity he lay under before his ordination, which answers to what was for many ages called in the church, reducing a clergyman to lay-communion. There would be nothing more extraordinary here, than the creating of a lord high steward, for instance, by certain solemnities accompanying the delivery of a white baton into his hands, and placing him on

an eminent seat, and his putting an end to his office, by publicly breaking the baton, and coming down from his seat. Whereas for a man to do a thing, which nothing less than omnipotence can undo, and which even that in fact will never be employed in undoing, to imprint a character, a something which, in spite of angels, men, and devils, shall, to eternity, remain indelible, appears the result of a power, inconceivable indeed, and little less than divine.

Whence ideas of this kind originated, ideas that do not seem to quadrate with the so much boasted power of the keys, which implies, alike, that of opening, and that of shutting, admitting and excluding, binding and loosing; ideas, of which the apostles and evangelists have no where given us the slightest hint, and of which it is plain they had not themselves the smallest apprehension, is a matter of curious inquiry, and closely connected with the subject of the hierarchy. I shall therefore endeavour briefly (in this lecture) to trace the rise and progress of so strange a doctrine.

Ecclesiastical degrees were not instituted originally under the notion of dignities, pre-eminencies, or honours, as they became afterwards, but as ministries, charges, and what the apostle Paul called *εργα*, works, 1 Tim. iii, 1. "If a man desire the office of a bishop," says he, "he desireth



“ desireth a good work.” Consequently if, in any thing denominated the office of a bishop, there be no work to do, it cannot be the office whereof the apostle speaks; for the misapplication of the name can never alter the nature of the thing. The persons accordingly possessed of such offices were styled, both by our Lord and by Paul his apostle, *εργαῖσι*, labourers, workmen. “ The labourers are few,” says the former, “ and the workman is worthy of his meat.” The latter recommends it to Timothy to acquit himself as “ a workman that needeth “ not be ashamed.”

For some time, indeed, it could hardly enter into the mind of any man, to think himself entitled to decline executing personally, whilst able to execute, a trust solemnly committed to him, and which he had himself undertaken. For the terms *ordination* and *appointment to a particular pastoral charge* were perfectly synonymous. If one, however, in those truly primitive times, (which but rarely happened) found it necessary to retire from the work, he never thought of retaining either the title, or the emoluments. And though the ministers were of two kinds, the one called anciently the ministry of the word, and, in later times, the cure of souls, and the other a ministry in things temporal, for the support and relief of the poor

and infirm, as was the deaconship, those in both offices were equally held bound to personal service. Nor would any one have thought, in the earliest ages, of serving by a deputy, unless for a short time, and on account of some remarkable and unavoidable impediment; much less would he have accepted another charge that was incompatible with his former one. But to be made a bishop, and in being so to receive no charge whatever, to have no work to execute, could have been regarded no otherwise than as a contradiction in terms.

Indeed, the name of the office implied the service, without which it could not subsist, that is, without which there was no office. The name bishop, as I have observed, means overseer, and this is a term manifestly correlative to that which expresses the thing to be overseen. The connection is equally necessary and essential as between father and child, sovereign and subject, husband and wife. The one is inconceivable without the other. Ye cannot make a man an overseer to whom ye give no oversight, no more than ye can make a man a shepherd, to whom ye give the charge of no sheep, or a husband to whom ye give no wife. Nay, in fact, as a man ceases to be a husband, the moment that he ceases to have a wife, and is no longer a shepherd than he has the care of sheep, so in the  
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only proper and original import of the words, a bishop continues a bishop only whilst he continues to have people under his spiritual care. These things, indeed, are so plain, that one is almost ashamed to attempt to illustrate them. Yet the changes that too soon ensued, have turned matters so intirely off their original bottom, that propositions which, in the age of the apostles, must have appeared self-evident, require a careful developement to us moderns; so much is the import of names and phrases altered in the course of some successive centuries. Let us therefore endeavour to investigate the source of these alterations.

When, as it happened in a few ages, the church was become populous and extensive; and when, released from persecution, it was beginning to taste the sweets of ease and affluence; when men, by consequence, were growing less zealous and more remiss; as the several congregations were supplied by their respective presbyteries, which were a sort of colleges of ministers, who under the bishop had the charge in common; it happened sometimes that one of these, without creating great inconvenience to his colleagues, retired from the service, and either for the sake of study and improvement, or from some other reason, resided elsewhere. The presbyters had not then separate charges, and the consistory

could sufficiently supply the necessary functions with one more or one fewer. But he, who in this manner retired from the parish, did not retain any charge of the people; as little did he draw thence any emolument whatever. Thus Jerom, a presbyter of Antioch, Ruffinus, in like manner, of Aquileia, and Paulinus of Barcelona, resided little in those places.

Afterwards, as evil customs always spring from small beginnings, the number of such absentees daily increasing, this degenerated into a very gross abuse; and those nominal pastors having become odious, on account of their idle way of living, got the name of vagabond clerks, of whom frequent mention is made in the laws and novels of Justinian. But before the commencement of the sixth century, none ever thought of holding the title, and enjoying the profits of an office, without serving. Then, indeed, in the western church, the condition of ecclesiastical ministries underwent a considerable change, and came to be regarded as degrees of dignities, and honours, and rewards of past services. As formerly, in ecclesiastic promotions, the need of a particular church being considered, a person fit for the charge was provided, so now the rule was inverted, and the condition and rank of the person being considered, a degree, dignity, or benefice, was provided, which suited his quality and



and expectations, whence sprang very naturally the custom of doing the work by a delegate. And as one abuse commonly ushers in another, the assistance, the presence, nay, the residence of the principal, came also gradually to be dispensed with. Indeed, when the man is not chosen, because fit for the charge, but when the charge is chosen, or (to speak more properly) when the rank, the titles, and the revenues are chosen, as convenient for the man, things must inevitably take that course. The primitive view is totally reversed. The man's accommodation is then become the primary object, the people's accommodation, if an object at all, is but the secondary at the most. That is the end, this is only the means.

In process of time, this became so frequent in some places, and particularly in some of the richest dioceses and parishes, wherein, for several successions, the residence of the occupant had been dispensed with, that through the gradual, but sure operation of custom, he came to be considered as not obliged to perform any pastoral function, or so much as to reside among the people, of whom he was denominated the pastor, and from whom he drew a considerable stipend, or revenue. The apostle's maxim was a maxim no longer. "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." Many

then desired the office of a bishop, if without absurdity we can say so, who desired no work at all, good or bad, and they desired it for that very reason, because they chose to be idle. Indeed, it must be owned, the term *ἐπισκοπή*, charge, oversight, used by the apostle, necessarily implies work. These two are indistinguishable. But in the times we now speak of, men were become much more refined than the apostles, both in distinguishing and in separating. First sprang the distinction, then the separation of the *order* from the *office*. Hence arose the odious distinction of benefices with residence, and benefices without residence. Of much the same import is the distinction of benefices *cum cura*, and those *sine cura animarum*; from the last of which comes the English name *sinecure*. This corruption in practice was followed by the absurdity in doctrine, which some did not blush to maintain, that one might acquire an ecclesiastical title and salary, without coming under any obligation. The absurdity here was the more glaring, that it had been an old and established maxim of the canonists, “*beneficium datur propter officium.*” The benefice is given for the office. In order, however, to palliate, though ineffectually, their contradicting a maxim so reasonable, and so universally approved, they explained the office to mean his reading the

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horary prayers of the breviary ; so that for once taking into his hand the breviary, and reading the prayers in public, in a muttering voice, as quick as his tongue was able to utter them, which they explain to be doing the office, (for thus the best laws are eluded) he was entitled to a yearly rent of, perhaps, ten thousand crowns. There is a practice in England, when a man is presented to a rectory, which is there called *reading himself in*, that has but too close an affinity to the former.

But this was not all ; there came insensibly into use, probably through the influence of such examples as those of Jerom and Paulinus above-mentioned, what was called loose or absolute ordination, wherein a man received the degree of presbyter, though of no particular church, and equally without a benefice, and without a charge. Some time after, for things always advance from less to greater, the degree of bishop was conferred in the same manner. This may be said, in some respect, to be much more pardonable than the former abuse, because here, if there was no office or duty required, there was no benefice given. Nothing, however, could be more repugnant both to primitive practice, and to the only meaning which the word originally bore. To ordain a man was nothing else but, in a solemn manner, to assign him a pastoral charge.

charge. To give him no charge, and not to ordain him, were perfectly identical. It has been urged in support of these honorary degrees, that a bishop is not so much to be considered under the notion of the pastor of a particular church or congregation, as under the notion of a catholic bishop, or pastor of the universal church; that this last being the more important relation, ought to be regarded as the principal. But I beg to know what we are to understand by the term *catholic*, or *universal bishop*. In the strictest acceptation, it is applicable only to the apostles, as I had occasion formerly to observe. Nor was the title in that sense, after their time, assumed by any, till in the decline of all rational religion and useful knowledge, it was, to the great scandal of the better part of christians, arrogated first by the bishop of Constantinople, and afterwards by the bishop of Rome. But though it may be allowed, that in a looser sense every bishop may be styled a catholic bishop, that is, a pastor, belonging to the catholic church, and one who hath a share in its government, he is not otherwise accounted so, but as he has the charge of a particular church, which is a component part of the catholic church. The catholic, or universal church, is no other than the aggregate of all the individual churches, and the one christian episcopate, wherein all bishops have been said to be sharers,



sharers, is the aggregate of all the individual episcopates possessed by the several bishops. Thus Cyprian (Epist. 55,) denominates the church of Christ, “Una ecclesia in multa membra divisa;” and the episcopal office, (De unitate ecclesiæ) “Unus episcopatus, cujus singulis in solidum pars tenetur.” One episcopate whereof each bishop occupies a distinct part; or still more explicitly in our language, One great superintendency, whereof each is the superintendant of a part. He therefore can have no share in this one episcopate, who is bishop or pastor of no part, and has nothing to superintend. Again the same father tells us, “Singulis pastoribus portio gregis adscripta est, quam regat unusquisque, rationem actus sui Domino redditurus.” He consequently can be no bishop or pastor in the church, to whom no portion of Christ’s flock is committed, and who has none to govern or instruct. That only is a member, which has in the body a particular function, by the proper discharge whereof the good of the whole is promoted. Any thing else, such as a wen, or other excrescence, though in the body, is no member, with whatever name you may please to dignify it.

We have seen, however, that from a few instances at first, in which men, for urgent reasons, obtained exemptions from ministering, when there

there did not seem to result any inconveniency from dispensing with their service, and when they readily renounced both the title and the profits of the place, there gradually sprang the abuse of ordaining more presbyters and deacons than the particular church, wherein they were ordained, could have any occasion for, and to the care of which they were not considered as being destined. Some found their account in being once named of the order. It was a kind of episcopal testimonial of their qualifications and abilities. And, indeed, if those ordinations had been universally understood as importing no more, and the persons so ordained had been regarded not as actual ministers, but as licentiates in the ministry, properly tried and attested, the practice, to say the least, might have admitted some plausible excuses. But this was not the footing on which they stood. Worldly motives, exemptions from secular jurisdictions, and other privileges, often induced men to court this distinction. The bishops, too, beginning to consider it as a sort of addition to their dignity, to have a numerous clergy under them, even though some of these were rather nominally than really such, were often too easily persuaded, to grant this favour to those who asked it. Sometimes, as I observed, even bishops were ordained at large without a diocese.

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This abuse, when once it had gotten footing, increased daily, insomuch, that it became necessary at last to give a check to it. Accordingly, in the council of Chalcedon, it was prohibited, and all such loose ordinations were declared, (Canon 6th,) I say not irregular or uncanonical, but absolutely null. The words are, *τας απολυτας χειροτονημενους ωρισεν ἡ ἁγία συνodus ακυρον εχειν την τοιαυτην χειροθεσιαν, κ̅ μηδαμ̅ε δυνασθαι ενεργειν*. Nothing in language can be more express, *ακυρον χειροθεσιαν, irritam ordinationem*, a void ordination.

Further they do not say, that when men, so ordained, officiate, their conduct is criminal, as was the style some centuries afterwards, in regard to those who officiated, in contempt of church-censures, but they affirm that such can no where officiate, *μηδαμ̅ε δυνασθαι ενεργειν*, and consequently, that their ministrations are no ministrations at all. It deserves our notice, that, notwithstanding the corrupt practice which had prevailed, there still remained so much of the primitive notion of ordination to the episcopal office, (for they had long considered the presbyters as only the bishop's curates and assistants) as the solemn assignment of a person to a particular congregation, to discharge among them the functions of a pastor, that they could not conceive it to be an ordination, where no such charge was given, and when

when a man properly got no office to exercise. It appeared a mere illusion, the name without the thing. Nothing can be plainer, than that as yet they had no conception of the mystic character impressed by the bishop's hand in ordaining, which no power on earth can cancel. The canon above mentioned was confirmed by many posteriour canons. Hence it came to be regarded as an established rule, or maxim, in the church, that none could be ordained without a title, which, though at first it was applied only to bishops, came, after the subdivision of his parish into separate charges, to be also sometimes applied to presbyters. By a title was then understood the actual charge of some congregation. I had occasion, in a former lecture, to observe, that the Latin word *titulus* was the name that was given to the inferiour churches, or chapels, allotted to presbyters, when it was found necessary, on account of the vast accession of new converts, that the bishop's charge, antiently a parish, and having but one church, should be divided and apportioned to the several presbyters. A man was said then to have a title, when he had obtained a chapel or church wherein, and a people for whose behoof, he was to execute the ministry. But as the import of words gradually changes with the manners and the times, by the term *title*, people came at length to understand  
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only a living, whether there was any charge, any *cura animarum*, or not. Thus the canons originally intended to prevent any, under the denomination of clergy, from being idle, were construed in such a manner, as though they had been intended to prevent any, under the denomination of clergy, from being indigent. And the reason they then gave for the rule was, lest such clergymen should be compelled, by necessity, to acquire a livelihood by manual labour, and thus derogate from the dignity of the priesthood. Idleness, in their apprehension, was no way derogatory; manual labour was. Paul's notions were surely very different; for he did not think that he brought any disgrace on the apostleship, when he worked with his hands at the humble trade of tent-making. But this by the way.

Some ages afterwards Pope Alexander the third, adopting the aforesaid interpretation, gave to the rule this turn, that none should be ordained without a title from which he could draw a subsistence; and added this exception, unless he has enough of his own, or by paternal inheritance; an exception, doubtless, very reasonable, if the sole purpose of a title was to afford a man whereon to live. Hence sprang new abuses, and some of the vilest artifices for making that pass for a patrimony, which had been lent to a man merely for the purpose of assisting him fraudu-  
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lently to obtain ordination. In consequence whereof, there were numbers of these nominal and fictitious clergy, shepherds that had no sheep, and overseers that had nothing to oversee, who lived in indigence as well as in idleness, to the no small scandal of the people, and dishonour of those functions of which they bore the name. At length, however, the import of the word *title* seems to have sunk so low, as to imply neither church, nor charge, nor living, but a bare name; insomuch, that a titular priest, or a titular bishop, came universally to denote a priest, or a bishop, who (in all the former acceptations of the term) has no title. Such were those Utopian clergy, whom Panormitan has not improperly, though derisively, styled nullatenentes, holding nothing, and who have been sometimes honoured with the addition of bishops, *in partibus infidelium*, this serving as a convenient sort of general designation, to supply the name of a particular bishopric: Indeed the custom still uniformly retained in the church of Rome, of annexing some such addition, is an irrefragable evidence of the ideas which were from the beginning entertained of the office, as incapable of subsisting without a charge.

In the latter ages the policy of the court of Rome came to be concerned in supporting this with many other irregular practices. The power of  
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of dispensing with ecclesiastical canons was a prerogative, which that ambitious see had for some time arrogated, and not without success. It found its account in it in more ways than one. When once the minds of men became familiarised to this usage, (however much the wiser part would condemn it on account of its consequences) it would be no longer viewed in the same light. People would still be sensible of the irregularity and faultiness, but would no longer perceive the absurdity and nullity of it. Not only the commonness of the practice, but the very epithets and titles given to these nominal pastors, together with the sameness in respect of privileges, and of the jurisdiction to which they were amenable, with those properly of the clerical body, would all serve to cover the defect. People would no longer be apt to think with Leo, who was bishop of Rome about the middle of the fifth century, and is, on account of his writings, considered as a doctor of the church, who affirms positively in one of his letters, (Epist. 92, ad Rustic. cap. 1,) “ Vana est habenda ordinatio, “ quæ nec loco fundata est, nec auctoritate mu-  
“ nita.” That ye may better understand the phrase *loco fundata*, it may be proper to observe, that among the Latins, at that time, when a man, in being ordained, was assigned to a particular parish, or charge, it was called *ordinatio*

*localis*, and the incumbents, by way of distinction from the nullatenentes, were called *locales*. However much the vague kind of ordination, opposed to *localis*, was, from ambitious motives, patronised by his successors, this pope does not hesitate to style it, not *illicita*, but *rara*; not unlawful, (though this might also have been said with truth) but of no effect. To have said the former only, would have implied no more, than that there was a fault in granting such orders; what he did say implies, that there was no real ordination in them. The doctrine of the character had not yet been discovered.

One will perhaps be surprised to hear, that our Scotch episcopal party, who have long affected to value themselves on the regular transmission of their orders, have none but what they derive from bishops merely nominal. I do not mention this with a view to derogate from their powers, but only as an *argumentum ad hominem*, to show how much their principles militate against themselves. It does not suit my notion of christianity, to retaliate on any sect, or to forbid any to cast out devils in the name of Christ, because they follow not us. If the lust of power had not with churchmen more influence than the spirit of the gospel, greater attention would have been given to the decision of their master in a like case. Even their own writers acknowledge, that

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immediately after the death of Doctor Ross, bishop of Edinburgh, the last of those ordained before the revolution, there were no local bishops in Scotland; not one appointed to any diocese, or having the inspection of any people, or spiritual jurisdiction over any district. But there were bishops who had been ordained at large, some by bishop Ross, others by some of the Scotch bishops, who, after the revolution, had retired to England. The warmest partisans of that sect have not scrupled to own, that at that gentleman's decease all the dioceses in Scotland were become vacant, and even to denominate those who had been ordained in the manner above mentioned, Utopian bishops; a title not differing materially from that I have given them, *merely nominal bishops*. For as far as I can learn, they were not titular, even in the lowest sense. No axiom in philosophy is more indisputable than that *Quod nullibi est, non est*. The ordination, therefore, of our present Scotch episcopal clergy, is solely from presbyters; for it is allowed, that those men who came under the hands of bishop Ross had been regularly admitted ministers or presbyters, in particular congregations, before the revolution. And to that first ordination, I maintain that their farcical consecration by doctor Ross, and others, when they were solemnly made the depositaries of no deposit, commanded

to be diligent in doing no work, vigilant in the oversight of no flock, assiduous in teaching and governing no people, and presiding in no church, added nothing at all. Let no true son of our church be offended, that I acknowledge our nonjurors to have a *sort* of presbyterian ordination; for I would by no means be understood as equalizing theirs to that which obtains with us. Whoever is ordained amongst us is ordained a bishop by a class of bishops. It is true we neither assume the titles, nor enjoy the revenues, of the dignified clergy, so denominated in other countries; but we are not the less bishops in every thing essential, for being more conformable to the apostolical and primitive model, when every bishop had but one parish, one congregation, one church or place of common worship, one altar or communion table, and was perhaps as poor as any of us. Whereas the ordination of our nonjurors proceeds from presbyters, in their own (that is, in the worst) sense of the word, men to whom a part only of the ministerial powers was committed, and from whom particularly was withheld the right of transmitting orders to others. When we say that our orders are from presbyters, we do not use the term in their acceptance, but in that wherein we find it used by Luke, in the acts of the apostles, by Paul in his epistles, and (if the name of fathers be thought to add any weight)

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by the purest and earliest fathers, Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, and others, presbyters; in short, whom the Holy Ghost has made bishops of the flock. But when we say their orders are from presbyters, we use the word not in the apostolical, but in the more recent, sense, for a sort of subordinate ministers, who are not authorised to ordain, and who, on Dr. Hammond's hypothesis, as well as ours, were not originally in the church.

Pope Leo's way of thinking, on this subject, is indeed the way that every man would naturally think, previously to the impression which habit never fails to produce. For example, what would one think of the pretext of making a man a king, *αποκληυμενως*, that is, without giving him either subjects or a kingdom? Ye will say, But may not the right to a kingdom be conferred on a man, whom we cannot put in possession? Admit it may; that is not parallel to the case in hand. Those merely titular bishops get no more the right, than they get the possession, of any one diocese on the face of the earth. Nor was it ever denied, that if, on the pretence of their consecration, they had seized any charge, whether vacant or full, they would have been as much intruders, as though they had never been ordained at all. The only thing, therefore, that could be said to be exactly similar, would be the

coronation and enthronement of a man with many pompous ceremonies, whom ye in the end saluted king; but to whom ye gave neither the right nor the possession of a single subject, or of a single foot of territory. What could be said more justly of such a ceremony than what Pope Leo said of those ordinations? “Vana est habenda inauguratio.” It ought to be held a sham inauguration, “Quæ nec loco fundata est, nec auctoritate munita.” Should it be urged, that the title *king* must be very blank without the name of some region or country, over which the kingly power extends. I answer, not a jot blanker than the title *bishop* or *priest*, without the name of diocese or parish. And if a bare name will serve, nothing is more easily supplied: king of the planet *Saturn*; or of *Terra australis incognita*, will sound as well, and mean as much, as bishop in *partibus infidelium*. By the way, a bishop’s charge is a church, ἐκκλησία, and a church consists only of believers. Infidels, therefore, are properly no part of his charge, no more than wolves or foxes are part of the flock of a shepherd.

With the Romanists matrimony and holy orders are both equally sacraments; and are, besides, thought to have a great analogy to each other. The relation which Christ bears to his church, that is, the church universal, is in Scripture



ture compared to the relation which the husband bears to the wife. And the relation which the bishop bears to the particular church under his care, has been often represented by the fathers as an emblem of the relation which Christ bears to the church universal. Pope Innocent the third adopts the same metaphor, calling ordination the spiritual marriage of the bishop to his church. To this idea also the ceremony of the ring in consecration, still retained in the church of Rome, unquestionably owes its origin. No consistent Roman catholic, therefore, can be offended, that I borrow an illustration from what he accounts likewise a sacrament, and the most analogous of them all, by the consent of popes and fathers, to the subject in hand. Now if it had happened to be (as, no doubt, if it had suited any political purpose, it would have been) the practice to celebrate marriages sometimes, *απο-  
λειυμενως*, wherein, if you will admit the absurdity of the expression, which, in these cases, is unavoidable, you make a man a husband, or marry him without giving him a wife, what would really have been conferred on the man by such a ceremony? By marriage, indeed, you lay him under certain obligations, and give him certain rights. But as the wife is the object of the one, and the source of the other, where there is no wife they can have no existence. The case of

the bishop is precisely the same. If you give him no charge, the obligations to superintendency, and the claims of submission and support, for want of a subject, can have no existence. What then is there in the one ceremony more nugatory than in the other? For if unmeaning words will satisfy, why may not the mystical, invisible, indelible character of husband be imprinted by the first, as that of priest or bishop is by the second? Holy writ gives just as much countenance to the one as to the other. But we may venture to affirm, that if it had not suited the church's policy to have some examples of such ordinations, unauthorised alike by Scripture, and by the nature of the thing, the notion of the character, in the way it has been propounded by the schoolmen, had never been heard of.

When those merely titular bishops and priests came to be elected into diocesan or parochial charges, the question was, in what manner were they to be received? To re-ordain them would have thrown an imputation on the first ordination, as though it had been of no significance, and little better than a solemn farce. This (though manifestly for some ages the doctrine of the church concerning them) was now by all means to be avoided, as it might tend both to correct an abuse, which the rulers of the church found

found their account in supporting, and to derogate from the people's reverence for the solemnities of religion. Therefore, beside what may be said to be conferred visibly and intelligibly in all regular ordinations, the charge of a certain district, in what regards spiritual matters, and the oversight of the people, there must be something invisible and unintelligible, which is nevertheless the principal, else all those loose ordinations would be mere nullities. This mysterious something they called the *character* impressed, which was no sooner discovered or devised, than it constituted the essence of the sacrament; the other particulars relating to the charge of a flock, which to an ordinary understanding might appear to be the whole, were then found to be but circumstances. And as the general practice of the church came at length to be, (for in this they were for several ages far from being uniform) to disapprove re-ordaining, as well as re-baptizing and re-confirming; and that even though the baptism, confirmation, or ordination, had been given by a heretic, or schismatic, or though the receiver had afterwards apostatized, they conceived that a character, though not the same character, was the immediate result of all these ordinances, and that being indelible, it needed not to be renewed.

It were in vain to look for this tenet in Scripture, where there is not the faintest trace of any such conception. It were no less vain to search for it in the fathers, who were unacquainted alike with the name, and with the thing. This even some of the Romish doctors themselves have not scrupled to admit, founding the doctrine solely on the authority of the church. But indeed on this (as on many other articles) the doctrine of the church has varied with the times. The council of Nice, the first of the ecumenical councils, expressly decreed, that such bishops and presbyters as had been ordained by Miletius, a deposed bishop, for the merely nominal or Utopian bishops were not then known, should not be admitted to serve the church as either bishops or presbyters, till they had been duly re-ordained, *παρακαλεῖται ἡ ἐκκλησία ἐπισκοπεύειν* \*. If an overture of this kind, in regard to any degraded prelate, had been made at Trent, in the last of their councils, it would have been received with universal abhorrence, and considered as proceeding either from the rankest heresy, or from the grossest ignorance. But that it was no heresy for many centuries after the Nicene synod, is manifest from the uniform style on this subject, both of the ecclesiastical writers, and of the councils.

\* Theodor. Hist. l. 1, c. ix.



Would we then track this nonsense to its source? We must dip, or rather dive, into the futile logomachies of the schoolmen; for it will be found to be the genuine production of the darkly subtle metaphysico-scholastical theology of the middle ages. Nothing could be idler than to attempt the refutation of a dogma, for which a vestige of evidence has never been produced. But were the business of refuting incumbent upon us, a little further examination of the subject, and of the opinions that have been advanced concerning it, would entirely supersede the necessity.

Two puzzling questions have been moved on this subject, which were hotly agitated, but not solved, in the council of Trent, where it was thought necessary, however, to make a decree, affirming the character in opposition to one of the Lutheran articles denying it. One question is, wherein it consists; the other, whereon it is imprinted. In answer to the former, relating to the quiddity of the character, as these sophisters love to express it, it has been observed, first negatively, that it cannot be an infusion of grace, as of faith, hope, or charity, because, say our profound disquisitors, all the seven sacraments confer grace, whereas it is only the three that cannot be repeated, the unreiterable, which imprint a character; besides, it can be neither grace nor virtue for this other reason: both these

these may be lost, whereas the character is indelible. As little can it be a particular qualification; which fits the person for the discharge of the duties of the office, for a man may become totally unqualified by age and infirmities, or he may unqualify himself by vice. Besides, it has never been denied that persons, very ill qualified, have been ordained, and never appeared one jot better qualified after their ordination than before. It could not be the gift of justification, because this is what the impenitent, in mortal sin, does not receive in any sacrament; and yet an impenitent, in mortal sin, may be ordained and receive the character. But to consider the thing positively; there were who maintained that it was a quality. Among those there were four different opinions, according to the four sorts of qualities distinguished in the schools. Some affirmed that it is a spiritual power, others a habit or disposition, others a spiritual figure; nor was the notion that it is a sensible metaphorical quality without its advocates. Some would have it to be a real relation, others a fabric of the mind; though it was by no means clear how far these considered it as removed from nothing.

As to the second question, the *nōi* of the character, there was no less variety of sentiments than about the first, some placing it in the essence of the soul, others in the understanding; some in  
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the will, and others more plausibly in the imagination; others even in the hands and the tongue; but, by the general voice, the body was excluded. So that the whole of what they agreed in amounts to this, that in the unrepeatable sacraments, as they call them, something, they know not what, is imprinted, they know not how, on something in the soul of the recipient, they know not where, which never can be deleted.

In regard to the indelibility all agreed, inasmuch, that though a bishop, priest, or deacon, turn heretic or schismatic, deist or atheist, he still retains the character, and though not a christian man, he is still a christian bishop, priest, or deacon; nay, though he be degraded from his office, and excommunicated, he is, in respect of the character, still the same. Though he be cut off from the church, he is still a minister in the church. In such a situation to perform any of the sacred functions, would be in him a deadly sin, but these would be equally valid as before. Thus he may not be within the pale of the church himself, and yet be in the church a minister of Jesus Christ. He may openly and solemnly blaspheme God, and abjure the faith of Christ; he may apostatize to Judaism, to Mahometism, or to Paganism, he still retains the character. He may even become a priest of Jupiter, or a priest of Baal, and still continue a priest of Jesus Christ.

Christ. The character, say the schoolmen, is not cancelled in the damned, but remains with the wicked to their disgrace and greater confusion; so that even in hell they are the ministers of Jesus Christ, and the messengers of the new covenant. Nor is it cancelled in the blessed, but remains in heaven with them for their greater glory and ornament.

I have been the more particular on this topic, because it is a fundamental article, with a pretty numerous class (and these not all Romanists.) I was willing to explain it, as far as it is explicable, from the writings of its defenders, being persuaded that on those who do not discover there a sufficient confutation, reason, and argument, Scripture and common sense will make no impression. An author, of whose sentiments I took some notice in my last lecture, has observed\*, that as the civilians have their fictions in law, our theologists also have their fictions in divinity. It is but too true, that some of our theological systems are so stuffed with these, that little of plain truth is to be learnt from them. And I think it will be doing no injury to this dogma of the character, to rank it among those fictions in divinity. God forbid I should add in the not very decent words of that author, (though

\* Hickes, *Christian Priesthood*, l. i, ch. ii, § 8.



I really believe he meant no harm by them)  
“ which infinite wisdom and goodness hath de-  
“ vised for our benefit and advantage.” The  
God of truth needs not the assistance of false-  
hood, nor is the cause of truth to be promoted  
by such means. The use of metaphorical ex-  
pressions, or figurative representations, in Scrip-  
ture, give no propriety to such an application of  
a term so liable to abuse.

## LECTURE XII.

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IN the prelections I have already given on the ecclesiastical history, I have traced the progress of the hierarchy as far up as the patriarchate, and shown by what steps that kind of oligarchy arose in the church. The only article that now remains to be considered, and which completes the edifice of spiritual despotism, is the papacy. Ye all know the common plea, on which the retainers to Rome have, not indeed from the beginning, but for many ages past, founded the right of papal dominion; namely, first, the prerogatives they affirm to have been given by our Lord to the apostle Peter; and secondly, the succession of their bishops to that apostle, and consequently to those prerogatives. Every judicious and impartial inquirer must quickly discover, that both the premises, by which their conclusion is supported, are totally without foundation. Neither had Peter the prerogatives which they pretend he had, nor have their bishops the shadow of a title to denominate themselves his successors.

I acknow-

I acknowledged, in a former lecture, that Peter appears to have been honoured by his master to be the president of the sacred college of his apostles, and the first in announcing the doctrine of the gospel, both to the Jews and to the Gentiles. I have also shown, that this is the highest prerogative of which there is any vestige in the writings of the New Testament, and that there was not any particular species of power which was given to him, that was not also, by their common Lord, communicated to the rest. They are all represented as alike foundations of this new Jerusalem, which, in their master's name, and as his spiritual kingdom, was to be reared. They all receive from him the same commission for the conversion and instruction of all nations. They are all encouraged by the same promises and the same privileges. Nay, as a convincing proof that Peter, far from claiming a superiority over the other apostles, did, on the contrary, subject himself to their commands, we see (Acts viii, 14,) that "when the apostles, which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John." Nor did Peter; any more than John, disdain to serve in the capacity of legates from that sacred body. Now whether is greater, the sender, or the sent? Canonists, and other Romish writers, affect much to compare the pope

and his cardinals to Peter and his fellow-apostles. Yet, I suppose, they will acknowledge, it would look very oddly in the pope, and be in fact incompatible with papal dignity, to be sent ambassador from the conclave, though nothing be more common, in the members of that college, than to receive legatine commissions from him. But passing this, whatever were the prerogatives of Peter, they were manifestly personal, not official, in reward of the confession which he was the first to make, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; a confession which may justly be denominated the foundation of the whole christian edifice. Besides, the apostleship itself, as I showed at some length, was an office in its nature temporary, extraordinary, and incapable of succession. In point of right, therefore, no peculiar privilege can be claimed by any church as derived from this apostle.

And if from the question of right we come to the matter of fact, the special relation of the see of Rome to this eminent ambassador of Christ, the partisans of papal ambition have never been able to support their affirmations by any thing that deserves the name of evidence. It has been questioned whether Peter ever was at Rome. The only ground on which the papist builds his assertion, that he was in that city, and founded the church in it, is tradition; and such a tradi-  
tion



tion as must appear very suspicious to reasonable christians, being accompanied with a number of legendary stories, which are totally unworthy of regard.

In opposition to such traditionary legends, it has been urged, that mention is no where made in Scripture, that this apostle was ever there; notwithstanding that there were so many favourable occasions of taking notice of it, if it had been fact, that one is at a loss to conceive how it could have been avoided. No hint is there of such a thing in the Acts of the Apostles, though a great part of that book is employed in recording the labours of this apostle for the advancement of the gospel, and mention is made of different places, Jerusalem, Samaria, Lydda, Joppa, and Cæsarea, where he exerted himself in this service. In the first of these he assisted at the consultation, which the apostles, elders, and brethren, held in regard to circumcision, and the ceremonies of the law; though this happened a good deal later than the time when the Romanists suppose his charge at Rome to have commenced. When Paul afterwards came himself to Rome, mention is made of the christians he found there, but not a syllable that Peter either then was, or had been formerly among them. Paul, in his long epistle to the Romans, or the church of Christ at Rome, does not once mention the per-

son whom these men pretend to have been their bishop. This silence is the more remarkable, that towards the close of the epistle he seems solicitous, not to omit taking particular notice of every one by name, who, residing there, could be denominated, in any respect, a fellow-labourer in the common cause. Nay more, in the beginning of that epistle, he expresses the earnest desire he had to visit them, that he might impart to them some spiritual gifts, that they might be established. This, if we consider the purpose for which Peter and John were sent by the apostles to the Samaritans, converted by Philip, as recorded in the eighth chapter of the Acts, will appear at least a strong presumption, that no apostle had been yet at Rome. Paul afterwards wrote from Rome, where he was twice a prisoner, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to Philemon, to Timothy, without taking notice of Peter in any of the six letters, or sending any salutations from him, notwithstanding the attention, in this respect, he pays to others. When he said to Timothy, "At my first answer," to wit, before the emperor at Rome, "no man stood with me, but all men forsook me,"—there would surely have been an exception in favour of Peter, if any such person had been there. Would he have said, in writing to the Colossians from the same place,

place, that Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Marcus, and Justus, were his only fellow labourers to the kingdom of God, who had been a comfort to him, if Peter had been in Rome? Or lastly, when he told his beloved son Timothy, that the time of his departure was at hand, and sent him salutations from all the brethren, naming Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia, would he have omitted Peter, if, agreeably to that very tradition formerly alluded to, he had been not only in that capital at the time, but a fellow-prisoner in the same jail?

The only pretence of scriptural evidence, advanced by the Romanists, is indeed a very poor one, not to call it ridiculous. Peter, say they, in his first epistle, presents the salutations of the church at Babylon, by which they would have it, that he must certainly have meant Rome. If they think he spoke prophetically, they do not, by this interpretation, pay a great compliment to the throne of the hierarchy. The propriety of the application, in this view, we do not mean to controvert. But our adversaries, on this question, must be sensible, that their explanation is merely conjectural. And is not the conjecture, which others make, at least as plausible, that by Babylon is here meant Jerusalem, which the apostle so denominates on account of its apostacy, by the rejection and murder of the Messiah,

and on account of its impending fate, so similar to that denounced against Babylon? But why, say others, should we, without necessity, recur to a figurative sense, when the words are capable of being literally interpreted? To do so would seem the more unreasonable, in this case, as the epistle is written in a simple, and not an allegorical, style. Why must the apostle be supposed not to mean the ancient Babylon, in Chaldea, which was still in being, and was then, I may say, the head-quarters of the Jews in the east; a place famous for the residence of many of their most celebrated doctors, and for giving birth to some of their most learned performances on the law? That the apostle of the circumcision should go to preach the gospel in Babylon, the capital of the Jews in dispersion, will be thought to have a degree of probability, which it would require positive evidence to surmount. Yet I have heard nothing, on the opposite side, but supposition, founded on vague and obscure traditions. But setting aside the imperial seat of the Chaldeans, there was, at that time, a Babylon in Egypt, a city of considerable note. What should make it be thought improbable, that this epistle was written there? That either of these was the fact, appears to me beyond comparison more likely, than that the apostle should date a plain letter in so enigmatical a manner, as could not  
fail



fail either to mislead his readers, or to puzzle them. A tolerable reason for this conduct I have never heard. For had there been any danger to the writer from what was contained in the letter, it would have led him rather to suppress his own name, than to disguise the place where it was written, a thing of no imaginable consequence. But the openness with which he introduces his name and addition at the head of the epistle, ought, in my opinion, to remove every suspicion of that kind. The case is very different in the interpretation of prophetic writing, such as the Apocalypse, in which the style is purposely symbolical and obscure. Thus we are fully warranted to say, that there is no notice taken in Scripture, notwithstanding the numerous occasions there were of doing it, that Peter ever was in Rome. I add, that there is not the least notice of such a thing to be found in the writings of any of the apostolic fathers, who had been in the former part of their lives contemporaries of the apostles, and had survived them, and consequently of all the ecclesiastical writers had the best opportunity of knowing. Clement of Rome, it is true, mentions Peter's martyrdom as a known fact, without specifying the place. It had, besides, been foretold by our Lord. I am inclined to think that it must have been at Rome, both because it is agreeable to the unanimous voice of

antiquity, and because the sufferings of so great an apostle could not fail to be a matter of such notoriety in the church, as to preclude the possibility of an imposition in regard to the place. But with this opinion I see no way of reconciling the silence of Scripture, but by saying that Peter's journey to Rome was posterior, not only to the period with which the history of the Acts concludes, but to the writing of Paul's epistles. In this case it is manifest, that he could not have been the founder, nor even one of the earliest instructors of the Roman church. It is astonishing, that at the very time, as is pretended, of the institution of the papal supremacy, and of the instalment of the first hierarchy, from whom all the rest in succession derive their authority, an authority by which the whole church, to the end of the world, was to be governed, at the time when among christians it ought to have been most conspicuous, and to have attracted the greatest attention, so profound a silence, in regard to it, is observed on every side. No hint is given of such a thing, or of any circumstance relating to it, by apostle, evangelist, or father. And that mighty sovereign the pope, that king of kings, the sublime head of the church universal, whose throne was erected at Rome, is treated alike by all, as one utterly unknown and unheard.

unheard of. No one seems to have formed the least conception of any such personage.

I shall admit, however, that that has been advanced, cannot be accounted a proof either that Peter, in the course of his apostolical peregrinations, was never at Rome, or even that he was not the founder of that church; but I believe, that every candid and capable inquirer will consider it as perfectly sufficient to evince, first, that he was not the bishop of the place, according to the proper acceptation of the term, and secondly, that their bishop, whoever he was, was not, by any prerogative whatever, distinguished from any other bishop. If, setting aside the apostles, Linus, agreeably to the common opinion, was the first bishop of that see, and was ordained before the martyrdom both of Peter and of Paul, the latter, when writing to Timothy, a very little before his own death, as he acquaints us himself, seems to have had very odd conceptions of the papal dignity, when he could huddle the name of the sovereign pontiff with certain obscure names, no where else to be found in the annals of history. “Eubulus,” says he, “greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia; and all the brethren.” He does not so much as give the pope the precedency. Is this the manner in which Paul would have treated the vicar of Christ, had he known or acknowledged any

any such character? With regard to Peter, if what has been said does not satisfy, that he could not be the Roman prelate, the words of Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, (Gal. ii, 7, 8, 9,) an epistle written from Rome, are perfectly decisive. There Peter is expressly denominated the apostle of the circumcision, and is said to have had the conversion of the Jews, throughout the world, eminently entrusted to his care. In this his mission is contrasted with that of Paul, who is styled, by way of eminence, the apostle of the Gentiles. That Peter then should be fixed in the metropolis of the Gentile world, as their particular pastor, the pastor of a church consisting mostly of converts from idolatry, is palpably irreconcilable with the account given of him by his brother Paul. Some ancient writers, in order to remove this difficulty, have supposed, that there were at first two distinct churches at Rome, one of believing Jews, of which Peter, the other of believing Gentiles, of which Paul, was the teacher. But this, for aught appears, is unexampled in apostolical antiquity. Though the Jewish converts, by themselves, continued for some time in the observance of rites to which the converts from heathenism were not obliged, these rites nowise entered into, or affected, their social worship as christians. Being one in Christ Jesus, and members one of another, it is much more probable,



probable, that they all assembled in the same congregation, communicated with one another, and had their pastors in common. To have done otherwise could not fail to occasion a schism between the two parties.

And in regard to the other point, that Peter was not the bishop of that city, those very testimonies evince, which have been pleaded by the Romanists, to prove that he was there, and that he was the founder of their church ; so that when any ecclesiastical writers style him bishop, (which by the way is not done by the earliest) it is manifest that they use the term not in the strict sense, but with a certain latitude, denoting only that whilst he remained there, he took a concern in regulating the affairs of that church. Irenæus, one of the most ancient authorities that have been produced in support of the tradition that Peter was at Rome, shows manifestly, in the passage quoted from him by Eusebius, that Peter was not considered, in his time, which was near the end of the second century, as having been bishop of that church, or even as its sole founder. His words are these, (l. v, c. 6,) *Θεμελιωσαντες εν τῇ οικοδομησαντες οἱ μακαριοι αποστολοι εκκλησιαν, Δινω την τῆς επισκοπης λειψργιαν ενεχειρισαν.* “ The “ blessed apostles,” (observe he speaks in the plural number, as he had mentioned a little before both Peter and Paul) “ having founded

“ and constructed that church, delivered the  
“ episcopal office into the hands of Linus.” Accordingly, in mentioning some of her first bishops, he always counts from Linus, not from Peter, calling Anacletus the second bishop, and Clement the third. All these three are mentioned also by Ruffinus, in the fourth century, as succeeding one after another during Peter’s life-time, and not as succeeding Peter himself. Nay, he affirms still more particularly, that Peter committed to them the office of bishop, that he might not be detained from discharging the duties of the apostleship. Several of the ancients, with Ireneus, ascribe the founding of that church equally to both apostles, whom, in a looser style, some denominate bishops as well as apostles. In this manner both Epiphanius and Eusebius speak of them. The apostolical constitutions, a compilation ascribed to Clement of Rome, but manifestly of a much later date, though probably extracted in part out of the old apocryphal writings, called *didascalies*, attributed to the apostles, and to apostolic men, say, that Linus was the first bishop of Rome, and was ordained by Paul, and that Clement was the second, and ordained, after Linus’ death, by Peter. That most of these constitutions, as we now have them, were not compiled sooner than the end of the fourth, or the begin-

beginning of the fifth, century, bishop Pearson \* and Dr. Grabe † have put beyond a doubt. That the order about the observance of easter ‡ is copied from a canon to that purpose of the council of Nice, and stands in direct opposition to the primitive practice in the east, and to an express injunction in that more ancient writing, called *διδαχὴ ἀποστόλων*, some fragments whereof are preserved in Epiphanius, is manifest, and sufficiently shows, that the compilers made no scruple of making such alterations in those didascalies, as they judged proper for adapting them to the doctrine and usages of their own time. In the end of the fourth century, therefore, Peter and Paul were equally honoured by tradition as the founders of the Roman church, but neither of them was numbered among the bishops properly so called.

But it does not satisfy the ambitious views of Rome, to say, that Peter was the founder of their church; for they will readily acknowledge, that he was the founder also of the church at Antioch, and indeed of many others, in the different places where this eminent apostle first published the gospel. Paul too was the founder, though not the bishop, in the ordinary and proper acceptation of the term, of many churches in Asia Minor,

\* Vind. Ign. Pars i, c. 4.

† Spicileg. patrum. sec. i.

‡ Lib. v, cap. 17.

in Macedonia, and in Greece. And though we have not so particular information about the rest, we have reason to believe, that every one of the apostles was the founder of some.

But, says the romanist, is it not agreeable to the voice of antiquity, that James an apostle was the first bishop of Jerusalem? And if that see had one apostle for their bishop, why might not Rome have another for theirs? This, if the fact from which they argue were, as they suppose it to have been, proves only, that the point which they would establish in the conclusion, might have been, that there was nothing incompatible in it, but by no means that it was. The fact itself, however, on which they build, must appear, even on their own principles, an absolute uncertainty. It is universally agreed, that the name of the first bishop of Jerusalem was James, and that he was surnamed the Just, but it is not agreed that this James was an apostle. Eusebius, Hegesippus, Epiphanius, Jerom, Gregory of Nysse, Chrysostom, have been numbered among those who held, that this James was only one of the seventy disciples. Some critics have thought, and with great appearance of reason, that out of the seventy, and after them out of the five hundred, to whom Paul tells us, our Lord appeared at once after his resurrection, all the first pastors of the churches of Judea in particular were selected.



selected. This, too, is intirely agreeable to what Clemens Romanus, in a passage I had occasion formerly to quote, acquaints us, was the uniform custom, that those who were the first fruits to the faith of Christ, were constituted the bishops of the congregations, planted by the apostles and evangelists. Whereas, to suppose that an apostle, who, with his fellows in that sacred collège, had received this express commission, as the last orders from the mouth of his Master, “ Go throughout all the world, teach (rather convert, make disciples, μαθητεύσατε) “ all nations, and preach the gospel to every creature,” to be confined to the charge of a particular flock, is to suppose him either voluntarily to resign his important commission, or to be deprived of it, and thus to undergo a real degradation. For beside the difference in respect of extent between these two missions, the department of an apostle is chiefly amongst infidels, whom he is commanded μαθητεύειν to convert, the department of a bishop is chiefly among believers, whom he is appointed διδάσκειν to teach.

An argument hath sometimes been formed in support of the papal pretensions, on the ancient use of such appellations as these applied to Rome, apostolic see, chair, throne, and the like. But it is too well known to require illustration, that these phrases, though, in after ages, appropriated

priated by the bishops of Rome to their own charge, were, in the first three centuries, applied to all the churches indiscriminately, in which bishops had at first been placed by the apostles. Such were Ephesus, Smyrna, Antioch, Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi. Afterwards these titles were still further extended to distinguish the metropolitical churches throughout the christian world from the sees of their suffragans. Of the same futile kind are the arguments drawn from the title *pope*, (a Greek word signifying *father*) and from the ascription of holiness and blessedness in the form of addressing the bishop of Rome. These things, it is well known to all who are conversant in church-history, were at first common to most bishops, especially metropolitans and patriarchs, and were given, as well as received, by the roman pontiff himself; though afterwards they were gradually, with many other things, arrogated by Rome as her peculiar prerogatives.

Indeed, it is so evident to those who are ever so little acquainted with these matters, that the true source of the grandeur of the roman bishop was the dignity of the place, and not any honours he derived from Peter, that to attempt to illustrate so clear a point, would, on the one hand be, to the impartial and intelligent, but a misspending of time, and would, I fear, on the other,

other, have no effect on persons whose minds are, either by prejudice or interest, swayed to the opposite side of the question. If the succession to Peter could be fairly claimed by any, the church of Antioch, beyond all comparison, would have a preferable title. We have express scriptural evidence that Peter was there, (see Gal. ii, 11,) and at least as clear a tradition that he was the founder of that see. I do not say that Peter, if he was the founder, could properly be called the bishop of Antioch any more than of Rome; but I say, that in whatever sense he can be styled bishop of Rome, we have much better ground to denominate him bishop of Antioch.

Pope Innocent, who, about the beginning of the fifth century, appears to have been the first who thought of deriving the prerogatives of his see from the apostle Peter, acknowledges, in a letter to the patriarch of Antioch, that that church, as well as Rome, had properly been the see of St. Peter, and that it was, on that account, of very great dignity, and entitled to a very extensive jurisdiction; nay, further, that it yielded to the see of Rome only because Peter had accomplished there what he had begun at Antioch. I cannot help thinking, however, that this was a dangerous confession, made by Innocent; for it does not seem so clear a case, that it should be the last church that the prince of

the apostles had founded and possessed, and not the first, which had the best title to priority in respect of honour and power. I believe most people would think it more reasonable to consider the first foundation of the first of the apostles as entitled to the preference, or first place, if there was to be a primacy in the church. Indeed, by the pontiff's manner of expressing himself concerning this great apostle, one would imagine he were talking of a mere modern, who, though settled at Antioch as bishop of the place, had no scruple to accept a call to a better bishopric, and therefore came soon afterwards to be translated (how, when, or by whom, we know not) to the metropolis of the empire.

No historical fact, however, can be more evident, than that the origin of the superiority of one episcopal see over another arose from the secular division of the empire, and from no other consideration whatever. Hence the pre-eminence of the see of Rome, whose bishop, before the conversion of Constantine, had only the precedence among the prelates, as bishop of the imperial city; but no jurisdiction beyond the bounds of the provinces, lying within the vicariate of Rome, as it was called, which was properly no patriarchate, being but the half of the civil diocese of Italy, and considerably inferior in extent to some of the patriarchates. In



every thing we may observe the dignity of the episcopal see was determined by the rank which the city itself held in the empire. Otherwise why should Alexandria have been ranked as it was before Antioch? The latter they acknowledge to have been founded by him, whom they denominate the prince of the apostles, whereas the former was not founded by any of the apostles: its erection is universally ascribed to the evangelist Mark. But the true reason is, that Alexandria was the second city in the roman empire, and the prefect of that capital had the precedence of the prefect of Antioch.

But above all, why was not Jerusalem vested with the supremacy; Jerusalem, the mother of churches, where our blessed Lord, by his death and resurrection, laid the foundations not of a particular church only, but of the church universal? I may add, where the Holy Ghost first descended on the apostles, where they were commanded to commence their ministry, “beginning at Jerusalem,” and whence the faith was propagated and diffused, as from its fountain, throughout all the world. And even with regard to the particular church of that city, it was surely entitled to the highest honours, inasmuch as it was, in the strictest sense, founded by Jesus Christ himself. For on occasion of the election of Matthias, before the descent of the

Holy Spirit, and, consequently, before the apostles entered on their office, the number of disciples that were convened there, probably not all that were in Jerusalem, was, says the sacred historian, about a hundred and twenty. And as the foundation of that individual church was laid by him who is the Lord and head of the whole, so the raising of the superstructure may most justly be accounted the work not of one apostle, but of the whole college of apostles. Yet the bishop of Jerusalem, though honoured with some special privileges, came in fact to be ranked among the patriarchs only in the fifth place, his patriarchal diocese being, in reality, but a small part, taken from the diocese of Antioch. And if the rejection of the Jews, on account of their unbelief, be held a good reason for the rejection of Jerusalem from being the capital of this spiritual kingdom, consisting mostly of converts from gentilism; why was not Cæsarea, or, as it was antiently called, Straton's tower, preferred before every other city; concerning which we have undoubted evidence, that it was honoured to be the place where, by the preaching of Peter to Cornelius and his friends, the door of faith was first opened to the gentiles? Yet the bishop of this Cæsarea never attained any higher dignity than that of métropolitan.

What

What but its new-acquired importance raised the see of Constantinople, formerly Byzantium, whose bishop, till the city was made by Constantine the seat of empire, was suffragan to the exarch of Heraclea, to be one of the principal patriarchates in the christian world; and to which its former superiour became, in his turn, suffragan? That it arose from no other cause, is manifest from the canon which first vested this see with that pre-eminence. The canon, I mean, is the third of the council of Constantinople, in the year 381, being the second ecumenical council. The words are, *τον μὲν τοι Κωνσταντινουπόλεως επισκοπον εχειν τα πρεσβεια τῆς τιμης μελα τον τῆς Ρωμης επισκοπον, δια το ειναι αυτην νεαν Ρωμην.* “The bishop of Constantinople shall enjoy the  
 “honour of precedency next after the bishop  
 “of Rome, because it is new Rome.” The first place is given to Rome as the elder sister, and that from which the empire still continued to be named. The second is given to Constantinople, because now an imperial city as well as the other. In the reason assigned for giving the second place to the latter, they clearly indicate the only reason then known for giving the first place to the former. This is still more explicitly expressed in the twenty-eighth canon of the council of Chalcedon, holden in 451, being the fourth ecumenical council. It is said

to have consisted of 630 bishops, and, consequently, was the most numerous that had yet been assembled. The reason on which the fathers ground their resolve, is thus expressed in the canon; *Και γαρ τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς πρεσβυτερας Ρωμης, δια το βασιλευειν την πολιν εκεινην, οἱ πατερes ειχσῶς αποδεδωκασι τα πρεσβεια καὶ τῷ αὐτῷ σκοπῷ κινεμενοι οἱ ῤυ Θεοφιλεσῶλοι επισκοποι, τα ισα πρεσβεια απενειμαντω τῆς νεας Ρωμης ἀγιῶταίῳ θρόνῳ, ευλογως κριναντες την βασιλεια καὶ συγκλητῶ τιμηθειςαν πολιν, καὶ των εσῶν απολαυεσαν πρεσβειων τη πρεσβυτερῃ βασιλιδι Ρωμη, καὶ εν τοις εκκλησιαστικοις, ὡς εκεινην μεγαληνεσθαι πραγμασι, δευτεραν μετ' εκεινην ὑπαρχεσαν—*“Whereas the  
 “ fathers, with great propriety, bestowed the  
 “ chief honours on the see of Old Rome, BE-  
 “ CAUSE IT WAS THE IMPERIAL CITY, and  
 “ whereas the 150 (Constantinopolitan) fathers  
 “ beloved of God, actuated by the same mo-  
 “ tive, conferred the like dignity on the most  
 “ holy see of New Rome, (that is, Constanti-  
 “ nople) judging it reasonable, that the city  
 “ honoured to be the seat of empire, and of the  
 “ senate, and equal in civil privileges with  
 “ ancient royal Rome, should be equally distin-  
 “ guished also by ecclesiastical privileges, and  
 “ enjoy the second place in the church, being  
 “ next to Old Rome—we ratify and confirm,”  
 &c. And as the council of Constantinople had given rank to that patriarch, this of Chalcedon proceeded



proceeded to add jurisdiction. My principal reasons for adducing this passage are to show first, that the rank and dignity of the several bishops was, at that time, considered by them as conferred by the church, and not as derived from Jesus Christ, St. Peter, or the college of apostles; none of whom are so much as mentioned by them; that therefore it is of human, not of divine institution; and, secondly, that the only reason assigned for the preference given is the dignity of the city, and the rank it bears in the empire. It is to no purpose to urge, that the bishop of Rome could never be prevailed on to ratify this canon of Chalcedon. It obtained, notwithstanding his opposition, was engrossed in the acts of the council, and remained a rule in the east ever after. It was no wonder, that the sudden rise of this new dignitary roused the jealousy of Rome. Constantinople, from a place of no consideration, was, in half a century, become the principal see in the east. An obscure suffragan was made chief of the Greek patriarchs, and next in rank to the Roman pontiff. Since the removal of the seat of empire, Constantinople was grown a great and flourishing city, and still appeared to be increasing; Rome was as evidently on the decline. It was natural for the pope to argue in this manner: "If  
" things proceed thus, can it be doubted, that

“ a bishopric, scarcely named in former ages,  
“ which has, with so little ceremony, been at  
“ one step exalted above all the patriarchates  
“ of the east, and had the second place in the  
“ church assigned it, will, at the next, with as  
“ little ceremony, be raised above the Roman  
“ see, and made the first?” There appeared  
some danger in overlooking these alterations,  
and therefore, under pretence of defending the  
rights of the sees of Alexandria and Antioch,  
and the canons of Nice, which, by the way,  
had not a syllable relating to the question, he  
warded off the evil which he suspected it  
would bring upon Rome. It is, however, suffi-  
cient for my purpose to show, what may be  
justly called the sense of the universal church at  
that time on this article; for the above canon  
was subscribed by all the bishops of that nume-  
rous council, with the exception of a very few,  
who favoured Rome. Allow me to add, that  
these councils, the Constantinopolitan and the  
Chalcedonian, are two of the four which pope  
Gregory the Great declared he held in equal  
veneration with the four gospels, and which are  
to this day in the highest authority in the Romish  
church. I pass the consideration of the validity  
of those canons, leaving it to the discussion of  
scholastic sophisters and Roman canonists. I  
regard them solely as the unanimous testimony  
of

of the leading men, and, consequently, of the church in those periods, concerning the source of the prerogatives enjoyed by particular sees, and the grounds on which they were bestowed. And in this view they are certainly of the greatest moment.

Indeed, so notorious it is, that the dignity and authority of the sees were almost intirely correspondent to the dignity and authority of the civil governours of the place, that when the emperor judged it proper to divide a province into two, a thing which often happened, giving them separate magistrates; the ecclesiastical polity underwent the like alteration, and the bishop of the new metropolis was raised to the dignity of a metropolitan. The provincial churches also were divided, and all those situated within the province newly erected, were withdrawn from their old metropolitan. This would not fail to create great animosities and discontents among the clergy, as well as to prove a strong incentive to ambitious prelates, who had interest at court, to apply for such a division of the province, as would raise their city to a metropolis. But as this practice was attended with gross inconveniencies, and productive of very great abuses, a timely check was put to such alterations in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, by the council of Chalcedon, that very council  
which

which established the prerogatives of the Constantinopolitan patriarch. Nothing, however, can be more evident, or is more universally admitted by all who know any thing of these matters, than that the whole fabric of ecclesiastical government was raised on the model of the civil polity; that the very manner in which power was distributed, and apportioned to the great officers of the state, was, in most cases, servilely copied by the rulers of the church. Nay, the very erection of their dignities, and the investiture of the dignitaries, were generally effected by the imperial edict; for those never hesitated to acknowledge the power of the emperor in these matters who were themselves benefited by his power. Afterwards, indeed, when perfectly secured by long possession, the possessors were not so willing to acknowledge the source whence their wealth and honours were originally derived.

In regard to Rome in particular, it is astonishing to think how suddenly, upon the establishment of christianity, its bishops arose, by the munificence of the emperors, and the misjudged devotion of some great and opulent proselytes, especially among the ladies, from a state of obscurity to the most envied opulence and grandeur. Ammianus Marcellinus, a pagan and contemporary writer, speaking of the horrible conflict betwixt Damasus and Ursinus for the episcopal



episcopal chair of Rome, which happened about the middle of the fourth century, a conflict in which the prefect of the city was compelled to take refuge in the suburbs, and which ended in the cruel massacre of a hundred and thirty-seven people in the basilic of Liberius, says, in order to account, in some measure, for the violence and fury with which this contest had been conducted, “ I must acknowledge, that  
“ when I reflect on the pomp attending that  
“ dignity, I am not surprised, that those who  
“ are fond of parade should quarrel and fight,  
“ and strain every nerve to attain this office,  
“ since they are sure, if they succeed, to be en-  
“ riched with the presents of the matrons, to  
“ appear abroad no more on foot, but in stately  
“ chariots, and gorgeously attired, to keep  
“ sumptuous tables, nay, and to surpass kings  
“ themselves in the splendour and magnificence  
“ of their entertainments. But how happy  
“ would they be, if despising the voluptuous-  
“ ness and show of the city, which they plead  
“ in excuse for their luxury, they followed the  
“ example of some bishops in the provinces,  
“ who, by the temperance and frugality of their  
“ diet, the poverty and plainness of their dress,  
“ the unassuming modesty of their looks, ap-  
“ prove themselves pure and upright to the  
“ eternal God, and all his genuine worship-  
“ pers.”

“ pers \*.” I bring this quotation the rather, because it affords the testimony of a heathen, (who, therefore, cannot be supposed partial to the cause of christianity) that to whatever pitch of pride and arrogance the church potentates, in the great cities, were now arrived, there were not wanting christian pastors in the country, whose lives did honour to their profession, showing, that the spirit of the meek and humble Jesus was not totally extinct among those who were denominated his followers and servants. Let me add, that the readiness with which that author gives so honourable a testimony to the temper and manners of several ministers of Christ, raises him above the suspicion of being actuated by malice to the cause; in the reproaches he throws on the ostentation and sensuality of others.

In confirmation, if it be thought necessary, of the account given by an infidel, of the grandeur, and even more than royal state, in which the Roman pontiff then lived, I shall add what is told by Jerom, a christian writer, and a father of the church, who was also a contemporary and an intimate friend of the bishop. *Prætextatus*, a nobleman of the highest rank, and honoured with the greatest and most lucrative employ-

\* *Lib. xxvii, cap, 3.*

ments of the empire, but zealously attached to paganism, conversing once familiarly with Damasus, the successful candidate, on the subject of their different religions, said to the prelate, in a sort of pleasantry, “ Make me but bishop  
“ of Rome, and I will turn christian immediately.” Now it deserves to be remarked, that christianity, considered as an establishment, supported by legal sanctions, and enjoying the countenance of the magistrate, was then only of about fifty years standing. It was no longer since the church had emerged out of obscurity, and been released from a most bloody persecution, begun by Dioclesian, about the beginning of the century, and continued with little interruption for ten successive years. That in so short a compass this episcopal see should have mounted almost to the summit of earthly grandeur, would be looked upon, if not so amply attested, as a thing incredible.

But whatever its wealth and splendour might be even at this early period, its power was yet but in its infancy. It is, however, certain, that a remarkable superiority in respect of property, is the surest foundation on which a permanent dominion can be raised. But to account, in some measure, for the suddenness of this acquisition of riches, it ought to be observed, that it had been, long before, customary for all christi-

ans that were capable, but especially the more wealthy, to make liberal offerings to the church, as on other occasions, so particularly at the celebration of the more solemn festivals. These offerings, after supplying the needs of the church, and supporting its ministers, were understood, at first, to be devoted to the relief of the distressed and needy, strangers, orphans, widows, prisoners, and sick. Accordingly, with these truly pious and charitable donations, the bishops of Rome used, in earlier times, in the first place, to relieve the poor of their own church, and when that end was attained, to send the overplus to other churches, where the poor were numerous, the people in general less affluent, and, consequently, the offerings insufficient:

Of this humane and generous practice, the duration was only whilst the church itself remained in affliction and obscurity. It may appear a paradox, but it is too well confirmed by experience, that nothing is a greater enemy to generosity, than the unexpected acquisition of boundless wealth. This proves almost invariably the parent of ambition. And when ambition comes to supplant charity, and a pompous species of superstition to be substituted for rational devotion, the poor are forgotten on all sides. The exaltation of the priesthood, the exterior glory of the sacred service, magnificent temples, richly furnished



furnished and decorated, gorgeous vestments, with whatever can dazzle the senses of those present at the public ministrations, appear even to the bulk of the people the noblest object of their liberality, as tending more than any other to the honour of God, and the advancement of religion. In consequence of this gradual change in men's sentiments, the oblations made to the church would be gradually alienated from the primitive purpose, not only with impunity, but even with general approbation. Though the support of the ministers, in many places, did not now, as formerly, depend on the voluntary contributions of the people, all the principal sees having fixed revenues and temporalities annexed to them, the ministers were still, by a kind of prescription, or immemorial custom, considered as having a personal interest in the sacred offerings. And though these were not wanted for the supply of the necessities, or even of the conveniences of life, there is no imaginable limit can be set to its luxuries, and for the supply of these there would ever be occasion. The thoughts of these upstart princes would then naturally fix on splendid equipages, numerous retinues, princely apparel, expensive tables, superb palaces, and whatever else could feed their vanity, and put them upon the level (as in a few cities, Rome and Constantinople in particular, they were

were quickly put upon the level) with the greatest monarchs.

But to take a brief survey of the principal causes which contributed to raise the papacy to that zenith of glory, which it actually reached, shall be reserved for the subject of some other lectures. In this I have only examined the foundation.

## LECTURE XIII.

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IN my last lecture, I entered on the consideration of the rise of papal dominion. I showed that the pretensions made by papists, in regard to the distinguishing prerogatives of the apostle Peter, and in regard to the title which the Roman pontiff derives from him, are equally without foundation; that neither had that apostle any such prerogatives as they ascribe to him, nor has the bishop of Rome a better title to be called his successor than any other pastor in the christian church. I took notice, that the very first pontiff, who advanced this plea as the foundation of his primacy and power, lived no earlier than the fifth century; I showed particularly, that the true origin of the pope's supremacy was the dignity of the see, and not of its founder, the wealth and temporal advantages derived from the congregation of that great metropolis, and not any spiritual authority and jurisdiction, transmitted from the fisherman of Galilee, who was styled the apostle, not of the nations, but of

the circumcision. I showed further, that this account of the origin of Romish dominion perfectly corresponds with the model that the church very soon assumed in conformity to the civil constitution of the empire; the dignity and secular power of the magistrate, in every city, especially in every capital, almost invariably determining the dignity and spiritual jurisdiction of its pastor. Hence the different degrees among the bishops, of suffragan, primate, or metropolitan, and exarch. Hence also among those of the same class, the exarchs, a few, who presided in the principal cities of the empire, such as Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, were dignified with the title of patriarch. And even among these, the precedence was always regulated by the rank of their respective prefects. To these, indeed, was added Jerusalem, from respect to the place where Christ had consummated his ministry, and our redemption had been accomplished, that is, where expiation had been made for the sin of man by the sacrifice of the Son of God, where the first fruits of the resurrection had been produced in him who was both the founder and the finisher of the faith, where the Holy Spirit was first given, and whence the gospel issued, as from its fountain, to bless, with its salutary streams, the remotest parts of the habitable world. But this was the only city  
which



which was honoured with any pre-eminence from other considerations than such as were merely secular. And even Jerusalem came but in the fifth place.

I observed before, that power has a sort of attractive force, which gives it a tendency to accumulate, inso much that what, in the beginning, is a distinction barely perceptible, grows, in process of time, a most remarkable disparity. In every new and doubtful case that may occur, the bias of the imagination is in favour of him who occupies the higher place, were the superiority ever so inconsiderable. And what was originally no more than precedence in rank, becomes at length a real superiority in power. The effect will be considerably accelerated, if superiour opulence join its aid in producing it. This was eminently the case with Rome, the wealthiest see, as well as the most respectable, because the seat of empire, of any in the church.

But it may be urged on the other side, that when the imperial throne was transferred from Rome to Constantinople, it might have been expected, that this latter place would rise to a still greater eminence than the former. That indeed, notwithstanding its obscurity for ages, it did rise to very great eminence, in consequence of the translation of the seat of empire, is itself

a very strong confirmation of the doctrine here maintained. That though the youngest of the patriarchal sees, it did, through the favour of the emperors, arise to such distinguished grandeur and authority, as long to appear a formidable rival to haughty Rome, and often to awake her most jealous attention, is a point which will not be disputed by any who is but moderately conversant in ecclesiastic history. But then it is to be observed, that Rome had been a church in the highest estimation for ages before the name of Constantinople had been heard. And as for Byzantium, the name by which the place had formerly been known, it never was a see of any note or consideration. In regard to the Romans, however uncertain it may be who it was that first preached the gospel to them, and founded a church among them, there can be no doubt of the antiquity of this event, since Paul, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, on his first coming prisoner to Rome, found a church there already planted; and since, in one of his longest letters, manifestly written some time before, and directed to that church, he mentions their faith as even, at that early period, celebrated throughout the world. Rome may therefore be justly reckoned nearly coeval with the oldest gentile churches. Certain it is, that the tradition which prevailed most concerning  
this

this church, in the days of Constantine, and for a considerable time before, was, that it had been founded by the two apostles, Peter and Paul. These were considered as the most eminent in the apostolical college, the one as the doctor of the Jews, the other of the Gentiles; the people therefore seemed to think, that it was an honour due to the mistress and capital of the world, to believe, that she had had a principal share in the ministry of both. Here was an original disadvantage, that Constantinople, or New Rome, as she was sometimes called, laboured under, which it was impossible for her ever to surmount. Antiquity has great influence on every human establishment, but especially on those of a religious nature. What advantage Old Rome derived hence, when she found it convenient in supporting her claims, to change her ground, as it were, and rear the fabric of spiritual despotism, not as formerly, on the dignity of the world's metropolis and human constitutions, but on divine right, transmitted through the prince of the apostles, is too well known to need a particular illustration. And though the younger sister soon learnt to imitate the elder, and claim an origin and antiquity nearly equal, pretending, on I know not what grounds, to have been founded by the apostle Andrew, the brother of Peter, thought to be the elder brother, and

who was certainly, as we learn from John's gospel \*, a disciple of Christ before him; yet the notorious recency, the suddenness, and the too manifest source of her splendour and power, rendered it impracticable for her, without arrogance, ever to vie with the elder sister in her high pretensions.

But with the two causes above mentioned, namely, the superiour dignity of the city of Rome, and the opulence of her church, there were several others which co-operated in raising her to that amazing greatness and authority, at which, in the course of a few centuries, she arrived. To enumerate all would be impossible. I shall therefore only select a few of the principal of them.

The first I shall take notice of is the vigilant and unremitted policy she early showed in improving every advantage for her own aggrandizement, which rank and wealth could bestow. Scarcely had christianity received the sanction of the legislature, erecting it into a sort of political establishment, before the bishops of this high-minded city began to entertain the towering thoughts of erecting for themselves a new sort of monarchy, a spiritual domination over their brethren, the members of the church, which

\* John i, 41, 42, 43.



might in time be rendered universal, analogous to the secular authority lodged in the emperors over the subjects of the empire. The distinctions already introduced, of presbyter, bishop, primate, and (which soon followed) patriarch, seemed naturally to pave the way for it. These distinctions, too, having taken their origin from the civil distinctions that obtained in regard to the villages, towns, and cities, that were the seats of these different orders, seemed to furnish a plausible argument from analogy, that the bishop of the capital of the whole should have an ascendant over the exarchs of the civil dioceses into which it was divided, similar to that which every exarch enjoyed over the metropolitans of the provinces within his diocese, or exarchate, and which every metropolitan exercised over his suffragans, the bishops of his province, and similar to that which the emperor himself exercised over all the members of the empire. Yet, by Constantine's establishment, the bishop of Rome in strictness was not so much as an exarch; the civil diocese of Italy having been, on account of its greater populousness and opulence, divided into two parts, called vicariates, or vicarages; the vicariate of Rome containing ten provinces, and including the islands, Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia, under the bishop of Rome; and the vicariate of Italy containing seven provinces, under the bi-

shop of Milan. In deference, however, to a name which was become so venerable as that of Rome, the precedency, or as it was also called, the primacy, of its pastor, seems to have been very early, and very generally, admitted in the church. But that for some ages nothing further was admitted, would have been at this day universally acknowledged an indisputable historical fact, had not many learned and indefatigable writers found it their interest to exert all their abilities to perplex and darken it. It was difficult, however, for wealth and splendour, the genuine parents of ambition, to rest satisfied with so trifling a pre-eminence.

Besides, many fortunate incidents, as the minions of Rome no doubt thought them, contributed greatly to assist and forward her ambitious schemes. The council of Sardica, about the middle of the fourth century, at the time that the Arian controversy inflamed and divided the whole christian community, (this council I say) after the oriental bishops were withdrawn, was, by Osius bishop of Cordoua, a zealous defender of Athanasius, and a firm friend of Julius bishop of Rome, who was on the same side with him in the great controversy, then agitated with such furious zeal, was induced to make a canon, ordering, that if any bishop should think himself unjustly condemned by his comprovincials and metro-

metropolitan, his judges should acquaint the bishop of Rome, who might either confirm their judgment, or order the cause to be re-examined by some of the neighbouring bishops. In this Osius had evidently a double view. One view was to confer an honour on his friend Julius, the other to give an additional security to the clergy of his own side. In those times of violence and party rage, bishops who, on the controverted points, happened to be of a different side from their colleagues in the same province, and especially from the primate, were sometimes, for no other reason, very tumultuously and irregularly deposed. A revisal of this kind seemed then at least to secure the final determination in favour of the orthodox, (an epithet which in church-history commonly expresses a concurrence in opinion with the majority) whose doctrine was at that time vigorously supported by the pope. This end, however, though probably the principal, it does not appear to have answered. The eastern bishops paid no regard to the acts of a synod, from which they thought they had the justest reasons to separate themselves. Nor was it ever accounted, by the African bishops, of authority sufficient for establishing a custom so totally repugnant to ancient practice, and so subversive of the standing discipline of the church.

But

But the popes, long after these disputes were terminated, well knew how to avail themselves of a canon so favourable to the exaltation of their see. Not many years afterwards, Valentinian, the more effectually and speedily to crush the dissensions and schisms that obtained, in his time, among the prelates, especially in Italy, and the west, enacted a law, empowering the bishop of Rome to examine and judge other bishops, that religious and ecclesiastical disputes might not be decided by profane and secular judges, but by a christian pontiff, and his colleagues. For this immunity, and the power thus conferred on the order, a considerable number of bishops, mostly indeed Italian, soon after synodically convened at Rome, expressed a grateful sense of the emperor's generosity and indulgence. The opinion, that the order had a superiour, even a divine, right, to be independent of the civil powers, a notion so prevalent some ages afterwards, had not yet been broached. The single agreeable circumstance, that the imperial edict gave an exemption to the clergy from the power of laymen, made them overlook a very fatal circumstance in it, which was, its tendency to enslave the whole order; (not to say the christian community) by subjecting them to the tyranny of one of their own number. But the bitter was surmounted by the sweet, or more properly, the  
poison



poison was greedily swallowed, as it was hidden under a vehicle extremely palatable. But no advantage, once obtained, was ever overlooked by that politic and watchful power.

It is evident, that neither the canon of Sardica, nor the imperial rescript, produced at first much effect beyond Italy, and its immediate dependencies. For a long time no regard was paid in the east, or even in Africa, to these new regulations. And their influence over the clergy in the west, it must be owned, advanced by very slow degrees. The subordination of bishops to their own metropolitan, along with the other comprovincial bishops, and of metropolitans to their own exarch, with the other diocesan prelates, had by this time been so well established, that it was no easy matter to remove foundations so firmly laid. Indeed, about thirty-four years afterwards, in the pontificate of Damasus, the primitive order was expressly restored, and the canon of Sardica virtually revoked by a council assembled at Constantinople, greatly more numerous, and held for many ages in much higher estimation, than the council of Sardica.

One thing, however, in the policy of Rome, to which they sacredly adhered, was never to lose sight of any privilege or advantage once obtained, never to be disheartened at any particular check, or present want of success, in asserting

ing a right, but carefully to watch their opportunity, and anew to urge a plea that appeared favourable to their pretensions, however often they had been baffled in urging it before. This perseverance never failed, on some occasion or other, to be of use to their cause. And one instance of success (the increase of the ignorance and superstition of the people keeping pace with the superiority of the Roman pontiff's) did them more service, than twenty defeats did them hurt.

To this unabated perseverance they added another maxim, namely, to make the raising of the papal power their primary object, to which it behoved every other consideration to give way. As this showed itself on numberless occasions, so on none more eminently than on the difference which arose betwixt the eastern churches and the western, on the subject of Acacius. This Constantinopolitan pontiff, who lived towards the end of the fifth century, had, in some of those absurd and unintelligible logomachies, with which the christian world, in those ages, was without intermission pestered, taken the side opposite to that espoused by the Roman pontiff. The consequence was, they first disputed, and, by a very usual progress, from disputing they came to quarrelling, and from quarrelling to an open breach. These holy priests, at last, most piously, according to the fashion of the times, abused, cursed, and ex-  
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communicated each other. The Roman bishop, indeed, at this time, made a bold attempt for surpassing all that his predecessor had enterprized hitherto. He summoned before himself, and a synod of Italian bishops, who were his dependants, and, on non-appearance, tried, condemned, and deposed a patriarch, nay, the first patriarch of the east, an order over which even the insatiable ambition of that restless power had never, till then, dared to claim any jurisdiction. The reciprocal anathemas followed of course. This produced a most memorable schism between the oriental churches and the occidental, a schism which continued for no less than five and thirty years, and subsisted through no fewer than five successive pontificates. The seeds of the dissension may be said to have been sown in the time of pope Simplicius. It was by his successor, Felix the second, that the patriarch was cited, judged, and deposed.

Though it was impossible that such extravagant proceedings should take effect, in opposition to the emperor, and all the oriental churches, they showed but too clearly to what height of pride and arrogance the boundless and ill-judged profusion of former emperors, senators, matrons, and opulent cities, had already raised this novel but formidable power. On this there ensued immediately a division of the church into two :

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the west adhering to the pope, and the east declaring for the patriarch, both obstinately refusing to communicate with each other. It was but too visible, by the sophistical evasions and subterfuges, which the Roman pontiff, and his immediate successor, employed in the manifestoes published to apologise to the world for this conduct, that they began to be apprehensive lest the papal power had been stretched too far, and beyond what the world was yet prepared to bear. For this reason they were fain to vindicate it on principles which the see of Rome has now, for several ages, absolutely disclaimed. But what was to be done? They had gone too far to retreat, without giving a mortal wound to all their high pretensions. And to persist, had the appearance of entailing a perpetual schism on the church. This last effect, however, was, on many accounts, rather to be hazarded. Their maxim seems to have been, Better be absolute despots in a narrower territory, than have, in an extensive empire, an authority not only more limited, but co-ordinate, with that of other potentates.

It was a practice in the churches, at that time, and had been for some ages before, to enrol the names of those, who died in the communion of the church, in certain records, which they called diptychs, wherein the bishops were registered by themselves. And of these, public commemoration



tion was made, by the officiating deacon, at a certain part of the service. After the death of Acacius, repeated attempts, both in Felix's lifetime, and after his death, in the time of his successors, were made on the part of the Greeks, to restore the amity that had formerly subsisted between Greeks and Latins. And, in effect, the whole ground of the quarrel, the henaticon, or decree of union, a compromise by observing silence on some disputed points, the objections against the synod of Chalcedon, and against the doctrine contained in a letter of pope Leo, on the controverted articles, were given up. The only thing, that served to obstruct the proposed union, was, that the names of Acacius, and the bishops who succeeded him, during the continuance of the schism, were in the oriental churches still retained and read in the diptychs.

This, though it did not in the least affect the doctrine in debate, affected what more nearly touched Rome, the supremacy she aspired at over all other churches. Whilst the names of those prelates continued there, they were acknowledged as lawful bishops, notwithstanding that they had all been either deposed by the Roman pontiff, or at least refused his communion. And though nothing could be a more barefaced usurpation than the power then, for the first time, arrogated by the pope, it was, after repeated trials,

found impossible to obtain reconciliation on any other terms. This obstinacy, or, if ye will, firmness, in the pontiff, will appear the more remarkable, when the other circumstances of the case are attended to. The Constantinopolitans were so attached to the memory of Acacius, that for many years no successor could permit his name to be erased, without endangering not only his own life, but the tranquillity both of the city, and of a great part of the empire. The emperors, themselves, long considered it as too hazardous a thing even for them to authorize. Besides, the east was at this time divided into two great factions, the eutychians and the orthodox. It gave the former no small subject of triumph, and no little advantage, over the latter, their antagonists, that these, whilst the variance subsisted, could reap no benefit or assistance from the western churches, though of the same sentiments, in the profound disputes of the time, with themselves. It was in vain for the Greeks to urge the impossibility of a compliance, without raising a combustion in the then capital of the empire. It was in vain to urge, that the continuance of the breach would endanger the total subversion of orthodoxy in the east, that is, throughout the better half of christendom. The pope remained inflexible.

The truth is, these arguments served rather to confirm him in the resolution he had taken, than to induce him to relinquish it. The more difficult the accomplishment of the condition was, on the part of the orientals, the more complete would be the victory of Rome. In like manner, the greater the clamour and the disturbances it might raise in the imperial city, and other Grecian churches, the more signal would be both the triumph of the Latins, and the mortification of the Greeks; and the less, in time to come, would the latter be disposed to hazard a breach with the former. And as to the arguments from the imminent dangers to which the orthodox faith, in the east, would be exposed by the continuance of this unnatural division, nothing can be plainer, than that this very circumstance hardened the obstinacy of the pontiff into downright inflexibility. He saw but too well the necessity the Greeks were under of obtaining peace on any terms, that they might be able to withstand and surmount so formidable a faction as that of the Eutychians, sprung up in the heart of their own country, and daily gathering strength from the divisions of the orthodox.

But, may one say, is it possible that the Romans should, from such selfish and political considerations, have made so small account of endangering, throughout the half of the christian

world, what they reckoned the purity of the faith, and absolutely necessary to salvation? That in reality they acted this part, is an historical fact incontrovertible. So far from abating of their terms, as the danger of the faith increased, they, on the contrary, raised their demands, in the persuasion that the Greeks, from the urgency of the necessity, would be disposed to yield them every thing. In fact, by this artful management, more was obtained at last than had at first been insisted on.

To one who reads the history of the church with attention and understanding, nothing can be more manifest, than that, with the Romans, power was uniformly the primary object, doctrine was always but the secondary. Their great political talents and address were constantly exerted in modelling and employing the latter in such a manner as to render it instrumental in promoting the former. This cannot, with equal truth, be affirmed of the Greeks. The many philosophic sects which had arisen among them, when in a state of paganism, had produced the pestilent itch of disputation, together with that species of subtlety, which enables those possessed of this miserable cacoethies, to find, on every subject, materials for gratifying it. Such were the disposition and habits which, on their conversion to christianity, they brought with them  
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into the new religion ; every doctrine of which was, by this frivolous, though ingenious, inquisitive, loquacious, and disputatious people, most unnaturally perverted into matter of metaphysical discussion. Hence sprang those numerous sects, into which the christian community was so early divided.

It deserves our notice, that for several ages all the controversies, almost without exception, originated among the Greeks. I use the term Greeks in the same latitude wherein it is generally used, in ecclesiastic history, for the oriental churches which spoke the Greek language, as contradistinguished to the occidental, which spoke the Latin. Almost the only exception to the remark I have made is the pelagian heresy, which doubtless arose in the west. The origin of the African sect of the Donatists was more properly a difference, in regard to discipline, than in the explanation of any article of faith. It may also deserve our notice, that though the Jewish state, from the time of Moses, had subsisted, for many centuries, in very different situations, and under different forms of government, yea, and in different countries, there were no traces of different sects, or of any theological disputes among them, till after the Macedonian conquests, when they became acquainted with the Grecians.

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